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III.—*UT PICTURA POESIS.*

The Latin poem *De arte graphica* by Charles Alphonse du Fresnoy was edited with a translation into French prose and with notes by Roger de Piles in 1668; and in 1695 John Dryden, "to satisfy the desires of so many gentlemen who were willing to give the world this useful work," not only translated de Piles's book into English prose but also supplied his translation with an "original preface containing a parallel between painting and poetry." Dryden's *Parallel* is one of the least original, but it is not the least interesting of his literary essays: Saintsbury¹ calls it "the first writing at any length by a very distinguished Englishman of letters on the subject of pictorial art." Together with his translation of du Fresnoy and de Piles, it forms for us English-speaking people the handiest introduction to that long-lived esthetic theory founded upon the proposition *Ut pictura poesis*. Lessing seems to have seen in Dryden's preface some suggestion of a deviation of the parallel lines from the common direction; or perhaps the point at which they ought to have parted company; for he wrote,² "Falsche Übertragung des mahlerischen Ideals in die Poesie. Dort ist es ein Ideal der Körper, hier muss es ein Ideal der Handlungen seyn. Dryden in s. Vorrede zum Fresnoy." Lessing probably had reference to the following passage:³

¹ *History of Criticism*, Edinburgh, 1900-02, II, p. 385.

² *Laokoon*, ed. H. Blümner, Berlin, 1880, *Nachlass A*, pp. 399 f.

³ Vol. II, p. 128 of W. P. Ker's *Essays of John Dryden*, Oxford, 1900, to which text I refer throughout when quoting from the *Parallel*. I quote du Fresnoy's Latin and de Piles's notes (in Dryden's version) from *The Art of Painting by C. A. du Fresnoy, with Remarks. Translated into English, etc.*, by Mr. Dryden, London, 1750.

"Next, the means of this [esthetic] pleasure is by deceit. One [of the arts] imposes on the sight, and the other on the understanding. Fiction is of the essence of poetry as well as of painting; there is a resemblance in one, of human bodies, things and actions which are not real; and in the other, of a true story by a fiction." Lessing did de Piles the honor of saying ¹ at least, when he cited him as one of many who held an absurd opinion, "So urtheilt selbst de Piles." Blümner was less respectful. In his introduction to *Laokoon* there is no mention of the *Parallel*, and Dryden is mentioned ² only in passing, as a poet who, like Milton and Pope, was addicted to allegory; de Piles is likewise wrecked on the rock of allegory; ³ and du Fresnoy is made to pay the penalty ⁴ for beginning his poem with the words

" Ut pictura poesis erit, similisque poesi
Sit pictura."

All three of these men deserve from students of Lessing more consideration than they received at Blümner's hands; and the theories of art for which they stood have much more than mere historical significance. All that we concede to *Laokoon* as a polemical document of almost unexampled timeliness we must reclaim for the views that it combated when we examine the questions at issue *sub specie æternitatis*. Even in respect to poetry, the subject in which Lessing was an undoubted expert, the contention of Herder ⁵—another expert—"dass das erste Wesentliche der Poesie wirklich eine Art von Malerei, sinnliche Vor-

¹ *Laokoon*, ed. Blümner, p. 191.

² P. 18.

³ P. 37.

⁴ Pp. 35 f.

⁵ *Erstes kritisches Wäldchen*, xvi, *Werke*, ed. Suphan, vol. iii, p. 138.

stellung sei" does not lack modern defenders.¹ And in respect to painting, a subject in which Lessing was no expert, the author of one of the most penetrating and suggestive modern treatments of Lessing's problems does not hesitate to espouse the cause of "the Greek Voltaire." H. Fechner writes,² "Der alte Simonides hatte doch nicht so ganz unrecht mit seiner Beobachtung, dass die Malerei eine stumme Poesie sei; ja man könnte diesen Ausspruch auf das ganze Gebiet der bildenden Kunst ausdehnen."

The only modern history of esthetics which, so far as I know, includes du Fresnoy and de Piles is K. H. von Stein's *Entstehung der neuern Ästhetik*.³ In this work, du Fresnoy seems to me to be somewhat overestimated, de Piles decidedly underestimated. An eminent French historian of art, S. Rocheblave,⁴ instructively connects du Fresnoy's poem with the early traditions of the Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture (founded in 1648, rehabilitated in 1662), and says that of the many attempts to formulate the doctrines of the Academicians only two of those in verse are important in his eyes: du Fresnoy's *De arte graphica* and Molière's poem, *La gloire du dôme du Val-de-grâce*, all the theories of which, and many of the verses, were derived directly from du Fresnoy. These poems, both dating from 1668, are "arts of the poetry of

¹ Cf. the chapter *Die Anschaulichkeit in der Dichtung* in Johannes Volkelt's *System der Ästhetik*, Munich, 1905, vol. 1, p. 412. Friedrich Schlegel's aphorism (*Athenäum*, 1 (1798), p. 45) remains essentially true and very suggestive: "Die Poesie ist Musik für das innere Ohr, und Malerei für das innere Auge; aber gedämpfte Musik, aber verschwebende Malerei."

² *Lessings Laokoon und das Prinzip der bildenden Künste*, in the *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, XIX (1884), p. 290.

³ Stuttgart, 1886.

⁴ *L'art français au XVII^e siècle dans ses rapports avec la littérature*, in L. Petit de Julleville's *Histoire de la langue et de la littérature française*, Paris, 1898, vol. v, pp. 660 ff.

painting" printed six years before Boileau's *Art poétique*. Of de Piles, Rocheblave has little to say. The thesis of Paul Vitry,¹ dealing primarily with du Fresnoy, makes mention of de Piles only casually, though always discriminately. As late as 1783, Sir Joshua Reynolds² thought it worth while to supply numerous notes to a metrical translation of du Fresnoy by William Mason, and to reprint Dryden's *Parallel*; but neither Sir Joshua nor Mason spoke well of de Piles. Winckelmann³ thought more highly of de Piles, and of the other writers on art whom he had read, before going to Italy than after his settlement there. Justi⁴ describes de Piles as "bei weitem der fruchtbarste und erfolgreichste Kunstlehrer" among the Frenchmen of his time. Certain aspects of de Piles's doctrine have, however, not yet been given the attention to which they are entitled.

I.

Du Fresnoy, de Piles, and Dryden represent nearly the last stage in the development of that form of esthetic legislation which, consisting chiefly in the codification of laws on the basis of ancient authority, began early in the Renaissance, and persisted down to the middle of the eighteenth century, when respect for authority gave way to confidence in the results of the processes of logic. Du

¹ De C. A. Dufresnoy *pictoris poemate quod "De Arte graphica" inscribitur*, Paris, 1901.

² *Works*, ed. Edmond Malone, third edition, London, 1801, vol. III.

³ Cf. C. Justi, *Winckelmann*, Leipzig, 1866, I, 301. Winckelmann refers to de Piles (calling him des Piles) in the *Gedanken über die Nachahmung*, DLD 20, p. 19.

⁴ *L. c.*, p. 298.

Bos, Burke, Diderot, Mendelssohn, and Lessing¹ were all, though in different degrees, students and admirers of the classics. Lessing, the severest logician of them all, ranked² Aristotle with Euclid, and rejoiced in the confirmation which the practice of Homer gave to his theoretical deductions.³ But Lessing and his immediate predecessors were men of the age of reason. In the same way, however, that they admitted authority when it did not run counter to reason, the theorists of the Renaissance and their successors reasoned with their authorities, and by no means attached the same weight to all of the propositions which in common they held to be true. The number of these propositions—particularly those derived more or less immediately from Aristotle, and immediately from Horace—was considerable, and there is no theoretical document of the Renaissance in which we do not find the notions of imitation, representation of nature, and expression of an ideal; or the habit of treating poetry and painting as sister arts; down to the time (1561), and beyond, when Scaliger declared in so many words *Omnis enim oratio εἶδος, ἔννοια, μῦθους, quemadmodum et pictura: id quod et ab Aristotele et a Platone declaratum est.*⁴ Treatises on painting, which are less numerous only

¹ Cf. these *Publications*, xxii (1907), pp. 608 ff.

² *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, 101-4. Stück.

³ *Laokoon*, xvi, p. 252.

⁴ *Poetice*, p. 401 of the edition of 1617.—H. von Stein says (*op. cit.*, p. 125): “Scaliger verbindet die Aristotelische *μῦθους* mit dem fernerhin unzählige Male zitierten Horazischen Worte *ut pictura poesis*. Von der Malerei auf die Poesie übertragen, ergibt sich dann aus dem Begriff des Nachahmens eine Forderung. Man ahme so nach, wie der Maler nachahmt; d. h., man halte sich an bestimmte gegebene Gegenstände, man bilde die Natur ab.” This is substantially true, but is, I think, misleading. Scaliger undoubtedly gave to this combination the weight of his great authority. He was not, however, the first to make it; and, so far as

than "arts of poetry" add Pliny to the list of fruitful sources; and there is a stock of anecdotes, derived mainly from him, which successive writers infallibly draw upon in pointing their morals. Some of the more noteworthy antecedents of the *De arte graphica* demand a brief review.

The leader of the troop is Leon Battista Alberti with his treatise *Della Pittura* (1436)—a sensible little book by a very distinguished man. Alberti's aim is twofold: to aid painters in a thorough understanding of their art from the point of view of practical execution, and to inspire them with the enthusiasm that he himself feels for it as a noble means of giving immortality to mortals and perpetuating forms of beauty.¹ He cites a host of classical and pseudo-classical witnesses to the esteem in which painting has from time immemorial been held.² Imitation of nature is his fundamental rule.³ By means of drawing, composition of figures, lights, shades, and colors, the painter endeavors to represent on a suitable surface the visible aspect of things existent in space.⁴ Among these things, however, are those emotions of the soul which

I can see, he did not himself misquote Horace in the manner suggested by Stein's formula; but he did write of his hero, Virgil, *Ita enim eius poesi euenisse censeo, sicut et picturis. Nam plastae, et ii, qui coloribus utuntur, ex ipsis rebus capessunt notiones quibus lineamenta, lucem, umbram, recessus imitantur. Quod in quibusque praestantissimum inveniunt, e multis in unum opus suum transferunt ita ut non a natura didicisse, sed cum ea certasse, aut potius illi dare leges potuisse videantur. . . . Itaque non ex ipsius naturae opere uno potuimus exempla capere, quae ex una Virgiliana idea mutuati sumus* (p. 259).

¹ R. Eitelberger v. Edelberg's *Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte*, XI, Vienna, 1877, p. 89.

² *L. c.*, p. 89.

³ *Niuno dubiti, capo et principio di questa arte, et così ogni suo grado a diuinarsi maestro, doversi prendere dalla natura* (p. 149).

⁴ P. 69. The parts of painting recognized by Alberti are *conscrittione, compositione et ricevere di lumi* (p. 99): the first, also called *circumscriptione*, is treated on p. 101; the second, on pp. 109 ff.; and the third, on pp. 131 ff.

find expression in movements and actions of the body.¹ Human beings acting are the worthiest subjects, and historical painting is the highest type of painting.² The painter should cultivate familiarity with those who treat or have treated historical matter in other forms, namely, poets, orators, and men of letters;³ for they practise arts in many respects like his, and can furnish him with many appropriate subjects.⁴ Poets make use of allegories, which are pleasing even as conceptions, and much more so when represented on canvas;⁵ and they also inspire artists in a more general sense, as Homer inspired Phidias to his conception of the Olympian Zeus.⁶ To have life, a picture must seem to stir in every part;⁷ and the painter's object is to arouse emotion in the breast of the spectator.⁸ At the same time the painter endeavors to produce things of beauty. He always imitates nature, studying the details of the forms of nature as children study the letters and syllables of words when learning to read.⁹ He then composes his pictures in accordance with an idea of beauty,¹⁰ and by means of traits which his

¹ Pp. 121, 125.

² *Grandissima opera del pictore sarà l'istoria* (p. 105); *ma poichè la istoria è summa opera del pictore*, etc. (p. 157).

³ P. 147.

⁴ *Questi anno molti ornamenti communi col pictore, et copiosi di notitia di molte cose, molto gioveranno ad bello componere l'istoria* (p. 145).

⁵ Lucian's description of the "Calumny" of Apelles is said to be pleasing *sola senza pictura* (p. 145). *Piacerebbe ancora vedere quelle tre sorelle, a quali Hesiodo pose nome Eglie, Heufronesis et Thalia . . . per quali volea s'intendesse la liberalità, chè una di queste sorelle dà, l'altra riceve, la terza rende il beneficio, quali gradi debbano in ogni perfetta liberalità essere* (p. 147).

⁶ P. 147; cf. Strabo, VIII, 354.

⁷ P. 115.

⁸ *Pictura terrà li occhi et l'animo di chi la miri* (p. 143).

⁹ P. 149.

¹⁰ *Fuggie l'ingegni non periti quella idea delle bellezze, quale i bene exercitatisimi appena discernono* (p. 151).

observation has enabled him, like Zeuxis, to collect ¹ from many individuals. The whole is, of course, to be composed with due regard to congruency and consistency of the parts,² and the skilful hand of the painter will always make it seem to have been reproduced from nature.³ With the many and useful technical matters which Alberti discusses we have no immediate concern. In conclusion we may note that he esteems painting more highly than sculpture; ⁴ and that, though he recommends the copying of statues as more instructive training for a painter than the copying of paintings,⁵ he does not laud Greek statues as in any sense norms of beauty; indeed, he does not refer to them at all.

Lionardo da Vinci's *Libro di Pittura* ⁶ treats painting as a science that he has studied experimentally; and reference to authorities, or even to other examples than those furnished by nature, are rare in it. The second and third of its three parts deal with very technical matters; the first is mostly taken up with a general definition of painting. In this part we find what is probably the earliest "parallel" between painting and poetry, as it is certainly the most remarkable. Poetry, to be sure, fares ill in this comparison, but for causes like those which made Lessing

¹ P. 151.

² Pp. 111, 115.

³ *Ma chi da essa natura s'auferà prendere qualunque facci cosa, costui renderà sua mano sì esercitata, che sempre qualunque cosa farà, parrà tratta dal naturale* (p. 153).

⁴ *Sono certo queste arti cogniate et da uno medesimo ingegno nutrite la pictura insieme con la sculptura. Ma io sempre preposi l'ingegno del pictore, perchè s'aoopera in cosa più difficile* (p. 95).

⁵ P. 155.

⁶ First published in Paris in 1651, without the first part, in which alone we are interested; now accessible in the edition, with a translation into German and a commentary, by Heinrich Ludwig: Nos. xv, xvi, xvii of Eitelberger's *Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte*, Vienna, 1882.

on his part unfair to painting; and, as Lionardo's editor says,¹ "Einem jeden wird sich bei diesem Faszikel des ersten Teils der Gedanke an Lessings Laokoon nahe legen. Wer aber aus der letzteren Schrift Konsequenzen für die Malerei und deren Verfahren ableiten wollte—was ja doch Lessings eigene Absicht nicht war, da dieser nur die Reformation des zeitgenössischen Geschmacks in der Poesie im Auge hatte—der müsste offenbar Lionardos Gedanken hiebei zum Korrektiv nehmen." Lessing makes his own definition of painting; and Lionardo, proceeding like Lessing from "imitation" as a starting-point,² recognizes in poetry a suitable art for the reproduction of such insignificant things as the words³ of men, but cannot too strongly emphasize its inadequacy to reproduce anything else. The kind of poetry that he condemns is in all cases descriptive.

As a true painter and a sturdy realist, Lionardo knows no other standard of value than the potential effect of real objects upon the senses; and no sense that can be compared with the sense of sight. The eye is the highest⁴ and the most reliable⁵ of the organs of sense; it is the window of the soul,⁶ through which alone can come to man an accurate conception of creation and his place therein.⁷ The painter presents to the eye images exactly similar in appearance to natural objects;⁸ painting is the sole art that imitates all visible things;⁹ it is universally and immediately intelligible without an inter-

¹ Vol. III, p. 153.

² Vol. I, pp. 36, 44.

³ *Solo il uero uffitio del poeta è fingere parole di gente, che insieme parlino* (vol. I, p. 24).

⁴ P. 18.

⁵ P. 16.

⁶ Pp. 30, 44.

⁷ P. 46.

⁸ P. 20.

⁹ *La pittura, la quale è sola imitatrice di tutte l'opere evidenti di natura* (p. 16).

preter,¹ and arouses the passions of men and animals as if its images were realities.² But the painter is not a mere copier of reality: the hands execute what the fancy conceives;³ there is no limit to the range of the painter's inventions,⁴ and his depicted figures have symbolical as well as objective significance.⁵ To his representations of the gods, people have made pilgrimages as to the divine presence itself.⁶ In many of these things, poets have vied with painters, but with inferior means; as the hearing is inferior to sight,⁷ as letters and words are inferior to things,⁸ as the name is inferior to the similitude of the object,⁹ as the imagination is inferior to the eye.¹⁰ The poet is as free as the painter to conceive ideals,¹¹ or to invent stories;¹² he can produce illusion,¹³ and rouse the emotions.¹⁴ But he cannot give to his ideal an objective reality.¹⁵ The painter can make his story more easily intelligible and less tiresome;¹⁶ the poet's illusion has none of the vividness of the painter's;¹⁷ and if the poet moves his auditors, he is perhaps then to be called rather an orator than a poet.¹⁸ The poet can prove by argumentation; the painter convinces by an exhibit.¹⁹ The poet tediously enumerates the parts of a body,²⁰ or re-

¹ Pp. 8, 38, 40.² Pp. 20, 32, 50.³ P. 32.⁴ Pp. 24, 48.

⁵ *E potrà dire un poeta: io farò una finzione che significherà cose grande; questo medesimo farà il pittore, come fece Apelle la calunnia (p. 32). Dice il poeta, che descrive una cosa, che ne rappresenta un'altra piena di belle sentenze; il pittore dice aver in arbitrio di far il medesimo, e in questa parte anco egli è poeta (p. 48).*

⁶ P. 12.⁷ Pp. 18, 52, 54.⁸ Pp. 32, 52, 100.⁹ P. 30.¹⁰ P. 22.¹¹ P. 28.¹² P. 30.¹³ P. 44.¹⁴ P. 48.¹⁵ P. 28.

¹⁶ *E se tu, poeta, figurerai un' istoria co' la pittura della penna, il pittore col penello la farà di più facile satisfazione e meno tediosa a esser compresa (p. 30).*

¹⁷ Pp. 42, 48.¹⁸ P. 50.¹⁹ P. 32.²⁰ Pp. 20, 38, 42, 48.

counts the successive stages of an action;¹ the painter's representation of bodies and actions concentrates all their elements into a single moment.² If, therefore, the effect of a poem be likened to that of a melody sung by a single voice, the effect of a picture is the wonderful harmony of simultaneous coöperation.³ Poetry is an art or science dependent upon many other sciences for aid; painting is a science that contributes its aid to others.⁴ Poetry beguiles the mind with mendacious inventions; painting represents the works of God as they are.⁵ Poetry gives us the shadows of things; painting, the bodies that cast the shadows.⁶ If you call painting dumb poetry, the painter may say that poetry is blind painting. Who are more afflicted, the blind or the dumb?⁷ Poetry may indeed be called a science for the blind, and painting, a science for the dumb. But even then, painting occupies the higher rank, since it appeals to the higher sense.⁸ Painting is poetry that is seen and not heard: poetry is painting that is heard and not seen. These two "poetries," then, or, if you please, "paintings," have exchanged the senses through which they must enter our understand-

¹ Suppose that you, a painter, wish to represent a battle. *In questo caso il pittore ti supera, perchè la tua penna fia consumata, innanzi che tu descriua appieno quel, che immediato il pittore ti rappresenta co' la sua scientia. E la tua lingua sarà impedita dalla sete, et il corpo dal sonno e fame, prima che tu co' parole dimostri quello, che in un istante il pittore ti dimostra. Nella qual pittura non manca altro, che l'anima delle cose finte, et in ciascun corpo è l'integrità di quella parte, che per un sol aspetto può dimostrarsi, il che lunga e tediosissima cosa sarebbe alla poesia a ridire tutti li movimenti de li operatori di tal guerra, e le parti delle membra, e lor' ornamenti, delle quali cose la pittura finita con gran breuità e uerità ti pone innanzi* (p. 22).

² Pp. 54, 64.

³ P. 38.

⁴ Pp. 20, 46, 48, 68 ff.

⁵ P. 54.

⁶ *Tal proportione è dall' imaginatione all' effetto, qual' è dall' ombra al corpo ombroso, e la medesima proportione è dalla poesia alla pittura* (p. 4).

⁷ P. 30.

⁸ P. 24.

ing.¹ But it is a crime against nature to bring in by the ear what belongs to the eye.²

Ten years after the death of Lionardo, Giovanni Giorgio Trissino begins the first division of his *Poetica* (Vicenza, 1529) with this brief "parallel" of painting and poetry: *Dico adunque che la poesia (come prima disse Aristotele) è una imitazione de le azioni de l'homō; e facendosi questa cotale imitazione con parole, rime, et harmonica, si come la imitazione del dipintore si fa con disegno e con colori.*³ And again, speaking of beauty, he says, *La bellezza adunque, e la culteza, le quali massimamente si appartengono al poeta, perciò che senza esse i versi suoi non sarebbono suavi, e dolci, in dui modi si considera: l'uno de li quali è naturale, e l'altro adventizio; cioè, che sì come nei corpi alcuni sono belli per la naturale corrispondenzia e convenienza de le membra, e dei colori, et altri per la cura, che vi si fa, e per qualche ornamento, che vi si pone, divengono belli; così è nei poemi, che alcuni di essi sono belli per la corrispondenzia e convenienza de le membra, e dei colori, che hanno, et altri per qualche ornamento extrinseco, che vi s'aggiunge s'abbelliscono; e sì come quel primo non è altro, che trattare ciascuna sentenza con la debita elezione di parole, e con le figure e rime opportune, e mescolare convenientemente tutte le forme di dire: Così questo ornativo è una certa cosa, che si da a li poemi, la quale fa coloro, che li sentono recitare, commuoversi, et amirarli; e questo consiste solamente ne le parole, e ne le rime, figure, e clausule, etc.*⁴

Trissino's contemporary, Bernardino Daniello (*La Poetica*, Venice, 1536) is more occupied with the substance and the philosophical content than with the form of

¹ P. 34.² P. 44.³ P. ii.⁴ P. vii.

poetry; but he is not impatient of even minute details of form; and besides the usual superficial "parallel" between poetry and painting, he has some noteworthy observations on both arts. The "parallel" resembles Trissino's, indeed is singularly like that drawn in the next century by Opitz:¹ *Per tanto dico, non senza grandissima ragione, essere stata essa poetica da gli antichi et sapientissimi huomini alla pittura assomigliata; et detto essa pittura altro non esser che un tacito et muto poema: Et allo 'ncontro pittura parlante la poesia. Perciò che come l'imitatione del dipintore si fa con stili, con pennelli, et con diuersità di colori (co' quali esso poi la natura, gli atti, et la sembianza o d'huomo, o d'altro animale imitando; ci rende la imagine di quello al uiuo somigliante) così quella del poeta si fa con la lingua, et con la penna, con numeri, et harmonie.*² Following Aristotle,³ and Cicero⁴ (as Vida⁵ did), Daniello recognizes three parts in poetry:⁶ *l'inventione . . . o uogliamo dire ritrouamento; la dispositione poi, ouer ordine di esse [cose]; et finalmente la forma dello scriuere ornatamente le già ritrouate et disposte, che (latinamente parlando) elocutione si chiama; et che noi uolgare, leggiadro et ornato parlare chiameremo.* As to the first of the three parts, the poet is unlimited, the opinion of some people to the contrary notwithstanding. *Anzi essergli concesso ampia licenza (si come anchora è al dipintore, di finger molte et diuerse cose, diuersamente) di potere di tutte quelle cose che in*

¹ Cf. these *Publications*, vol. XXIII (1908), p. 524.

² Pp. 24 f.

³ *Rhetoric*, III, I: πῶς τε, τίς τε, λέξις.

⁴ *Orator ad M. Brutum*, III: *Quoniam tria videnda sunt oratori, quid dicat, et quo quidque loco, et quomodo.*

⁵ *Poeticorum libri tres* (1527). Cf. Charles Ratteux's *Quatre Poétiques*, Paris, 1771, vol. II, p. 70.

⁶ P. 26 f.

grado li fiano ragionare, et iscriuere. Ben è uero che egli dee sempre hauer risguardo di sciegliere di tutte il più bello, et uago fiore . . . il sapere è principio et fonte dello iscriuer bene et dirittamente le cose: et la philosophia sola è quella che ne può amministrar gli alti concetti et le belle inuentioni. Following Aristotle¹ again, Daniello² admonishes the poet not to be bound, as the historian is, to the facts of former happenings, but, however much poetry and history may be alike in form, to mingle fact and fiction; for it is not writing in verse that makes the poet, but the presentation of things as they ought to be, in contradistinction to the historian's method of presenting them as they were: *er will bloss zeigen, wie es eigentlich gewesen*, to quote Ranke.³ There are in truth resemblances enough: ⁴ *Ambo studiano in muouer gli affetti, il decoro di ciascuna cosa in ciascuna cosa et materia seruando. Ambo insegnano, dilettono, et giouano parimente. Ambo le cose ne dipingono; et quasi dauanti a gli occhi le ci pongono.*

As Saintsbury says,⁵ there are some rather striking things in Daniello. But there is no serviceable distinction between painting and poetry. Such a distinction was soon made, however, by Benedetto Varchi. An inquiry, *In che siano simili et in che differenti i poeti et i pittori*,⁶ formed the conclusion of a lecture that Varchi delivered before the Florentine Academy in 1546. The lecturer

¹ *Poetics*, ix; cf. J. E. Spingarn, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*,² New York, 1908, pp. 28 f.

² Pp. 41 f.

³ *Vorrede zu den "Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker,"* 1824.

⁴ P. 42.

⁵ *L. c.*, II, p. 43.

⁶ *Lezzioni*, Florence, 1590, pp. 226-230. My attention was called to this "parallel" by Spingarn, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

begins with the observation that the two arts have one and the same end, which is to imitate nature, and that Dante, Petrarch, and Horace (A. P., 9 f., 361 f.) used the terms of each to describe the processes of the other. *Ut pictura poesis* looms up ominously here; but it is worth noting that Varchi cites the whole sentence in which this phrase occurs. He proceeds at once to differentiate. As if in tacit refutation of Daniello, he maintains that poetry is not philosophy, though in parts it may treat philosophical questions, as Dante did; nor is it merely verse, as distinguished from prose: *onde chi traduce Aristotile in uersi non sarebbe poeta, ma filosofo, come chi riduce Vergilio in prosa, non sarebbe oratore, ma poeta*. But there is a poetic style, which consists, besides numbers, in poetic words, figures, and modes of speech, *e così hauemo ueduto, perchè la poesia si chiama arte, e che è simile alla pittura, perchè amendue imitano la natura. Ma è da notare: che il poeta l'imita colle parole, et i pittori co i colori, e quello, che è più, i poeti imitano il di dentro principalmente, cioè i concetti, e le passioni dell' animo, se bene molte uolte discriuono ancora, e quasi dipingono colle parole i corpi, e tutte le fattezze di tutte le cose così animate, come inanimate; et i pittori imitano principalmente il difuori, cioè i corpi, e le fattezze di tutte le cose. E perchè i concetti, e l'azziani de' rè sono diuerse da quelle de i priuati, e quelle de' priuati sono differenti fra loro, secondo le diuerse nature, e professioni, perchè altre parole, e altri costumi ha ordinariamente e si ricercano in uno soldato, che in un mercatante, anzi un medesimo è differente da sè stesso o per le diuerse età, o per gli uari accidenti le quali tutte cose s'hanno a sapere e sprimere da' poeti: per questa cagione si ritruouano diuerse spezie di poesia, il che non auuiene nella pittura,*

perchè tutti i corpi sono ad un modo così quegli de' principi, come de' priuati, il che de gl'animi non auuiene essendo tutti differenti, cioè hauendo diuersi concetti: onde se bene i poeti, et i pittori imitano, non però imitano ne le medesime cose, ne' medesimi modi; imitano quegli colle parole, e questi co' colori, il perchè pare, che sia tanta differenza fra la poesia, e la pittura, quanta è fra l'anima e'l corpo, bene è vero, che come i poeti discriuono anchora il di fuori, così i pittori mostrano quanto più possono il di dentro, cioè gl'affetti, et il primo, che ciò anticamente facesse questo, secondo che racconta Plinio, fu Aristide Thebano, e modernamente Giotto. Bene è vero, che i pittori non possono sprimere così felicemente il didentro, come il difuori.

This is sound doctrine: wherein is Lessing's own any sounder? Have we not here even the determination of actions (expressions of the soul) as the principal subject of poetry, and of bodies as the particular subject of painting? In still another matter Varchi stands on the same ground as Lessing: *i dipintori se bene nel ritrarre dal naturale, debbono imitare la natura, e sprimere il vero quanto più sanno, possono non dimeno, anzi debbono, come ancora i poeti vsare alcuna discrezione*; i. e., in the interest of beauty, like Apelles when, by painting a profile, he concealed the blind eye of Antigonus; like the sculptors who put a helmet on the head of Pericles; like Timanthes in his picture of the sacrifice of Iphigenia; like Alcamenes, who contrived to give grace even to the lameness of Vulcan.¹ Varchi says, as Lessing does, that it was well for Zeuxis and Apelles to draw inspiration from Homer; but Varchi opines that Dante inspired

¹ These ancient examples are all referred to also by Alberti; *l. c.*, pp. 115, 119, 123.

Michelangelo in a different manner: *io per me non dubito punto, che Michelagnolo, come ha imitato Dante nella poesia, così non l'abbia imitato nell' opere sue, non solo dando loro quella grandezza, e maestà, che si vede ne' concetti di Dante, ma ingegnandosi ancora di fare quello, o nel marmo, o con i colori, che haueua fatto egli nelle sentenze, e colle parole, e chi dubita, che nel dipignere il giudizio nella Capella di Roma, non gli fusse l'opera di Dante, la quale egli ha tutta nella memoria, sempre dinanzi a gl'occhi?* For Dante was *non meno pittore che poeta*.

What Varchi said of Dante was similarly said, and illustrated, of Ariosto by Lodovico Dolce in one of the most important books on painting produced during the sixteenth century, the *Dialogo della Pittura, intitolato l'Aretino* (Venice, 1557).¹ If painters, says Dolce,² wish without trouble to find a perfect model of a beautiful woman, all they have to do is to read the stanzas in which Ariosto so wonderfully describes the charms of the fairy Alcina; in doing which they will observe that good poets are also good painters. Dolce is the spiritual ancestor of both du Fresnoy and de Piles. It is true that neither of them refers to him by name—du Fresnoy cites no authorities whatever—but the enthusiasm for Titian which both shared with him would create a strong presumption of acquaintance, even though there were no evidences of influence. These, however, are not lacking; and in spite of the fact that Dolce's dialogue has been passed in re-

¹ Translated into German by Cajetan Cerri in *Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte* edited by R. Eitelberger v. Edelberg, II, Vienna, 1871. I quote from an edition with a translation into French published in Florence in 1735. My copy belongs to the Boston Public Library.

² P. 178; cf. *Laokoon*, xx, pp. 285-290.

view by Blümner,¹ we cannot omit mention of its salient features.

Aretino, as the mouthpiece of Dolce, proclaims painting to be nothing but an imitation of nature (the closer the better), an imitation, that is to say, of visible things by means of lines and colors; whereas poetry, also an imitation, imitates not only these things but everything that is revealed to the mind.² The painter is a dumb poet, and the poet, a painter who speaks. But the painter can make his dumb figures seem to speak, to weep, and laugh; and can represent thoughts and emotions in so far forth as these are manifested in actions or attitudes, especially as they are seen in the eyes, the windows of the soul.³ This result is, of course, attained by the appeal of pictures to the imagination of the spectator; and such appeals, the painter's task being *di rappresentar con l'arte sua qualunque cosa, talmente simile alle diverse opere della natura, ch'ella paja vera*,⁴ not only produce a perfect illusion (like Zeuxis's grapes and Parrhasius's curtain),⁵ but also arouse emotion: *altrimenti reputi il pittore di non haver fatto nulla; perchè questo è il condimento di tutte le sue virtù . . . Ne può muovere il pittore, se prima nel far delle figure non sente nel suo animo quelle passioni, o diciamo affetti, che vuole imprimere in quello d'altrui. Onde dice il tante volte allegato Horatio [A. P., 102], se vuoi, ch'io pianga, è mestiero, che tu avanti ti dolga teco*.⁶ The painter, then, expresses himself by means of the lines and colors of his picture. But he also depicts actions, facts, and fictions in the person of the actors; painting is both poetry and history;⁷ *l'historia*,

¹ *Laokoon*, pp. 15-17.

² P. 106.

³ P. 110; cf. Lionardo, *supra*, p. 48.

⁴ P. 110.

⁵ P. 214.

⁶ P. 226.

⁷ P. 116.

*in che Raffaello imitò talmente gli scrittori, che spesso il giudizio de gl'intendenti si muove a credere, che questo pittore habbia le cose meglio dipinte, che essi discriette; o almeno, che seco giostri di pari.*¹ Michelangelo is compared with Raphael as a painter of historical subjects: *Non so, quanto al componimento della historia, che Michel' Agnolo ceda a Raffaello; anzi tengo il contrario; cioè, che Michel' Agnolo nel vinca d'assai. Perciò ch'è odo dire, che nell' ordine del suo stupendo Giudicio si contengono alcuni sensi allegorici profondissimi, i quali vengono intesi da pochi. In questo meriterebbe lode, essendo che parrebbe, ch' egli avesse imitato quei gran filosofi, che nascondevano sotto velo di poesia misteri grandissimi della filosofia humana e divina, affine ch' e' non fossero intesi dal volgo: quasi che non volessero gettare a porci le margherite.*² This admission is intended, however, as an encomium upon profundity, not upon unintelligibility; for Aretino proceeds: *Non mi par molta lode, che . . . solo i dotti intendano la profondità delle allegorie che nascondono.*³ As a maker and creator, the painter stands in close relation to the poet: he is advised not only to read history and poetry with diligence, but also to cultivate the society of poets: ⁴ *et è cosa iscambievole, che i pittori cavino spesso le loro inventioni da i poeti, et i poeti da i pittori;*⁵ e. g., Virgil described Laocoön as he saw him in the marble group of the Rhodian sculptors. The whole art of painting is comprised in invention, design, and coloring.⁶ *La inventione è la favola, o historia,* that is, the poetic element, which nevertheless gives rise to quasi technical

¹ P. 232.² P. 242. Cf. K. Borinski, *Die Rätsel Michelangelos*, Munich, 1908.³ P. 244.⁴ P. 172.⁵ P. 250.⁶ *Inventione, disegno, colorito*; p. 150.

problems of grouping, characterization, congruence, contrast, and the like. Design and coloring are purely technical—though we often enough find design applied to the problems of poetic composition—and in these elements, the problem of the artist's relation to nature presses for solution; *perciocchè la inventione si appresenta per la forma; e la forma non è altro, che disegno. Deve adunque il pittore procacciar non solo d'imitar, ma di superar la natura. Dico superar la natura in una parte: che nel resto è miracoloso, non pur se vi arriva, ma quando vi si avvicina. Questo è in dimostrar col mezzo dell' arte in un corpo solo tutta quella perfettion di bellezza, che la natura non suol dimostrare a pena in mille. Perchè non si trova un corpo humano così perfettamente bello, che non gli manchi alcuna parte. Onde habbiamo lo esempio di Zeusi; che havendo a dipingere Helena,¹ etc.—the familiar anecdote. E parte si debbono imitar le belle figure di marmo, o di bronzo de' maestri antichi. La mirabile perfettion delle quali chi gusterà e possederà a pieno, potrà sicuramente corregger molti difetti di essa natura, e far le sue pitture riguardevoli e grate a ciascuno: perciocchè le cose antiche contengono tutta la perfettion dell' arte, e possono essere esemplari di tutto il bello.²*

II.

De Piles comes nearest to giving a bibliography of his subject on page 114 (of Dryden's translation). After mentioning Pliny and Franciscus Junius on painting, he continues, "Many moderns have written of it with small success, taking a large compass without coming di-

¹ P. 176.² P. 190.

rectly to the point, and talking much without saying anything; yet some of them have acquitted themselves successfully enough. Amongst others, Leonardo da Vinci (though without method); Paulo Lomazzo, whose book is good for the greatest part, but whose discourse is too diffuse and very tiresome; John Baptist Armenini, Franciscus Junius, and M. de Chambray, to whose preface I rather invite you than to his book. We are not to forget what M. Félibien has written of the historical piece of Alexander by the hand of M. Le Brun. Besides that the work itself is very eloquent, the foundations which he establishes for the making of a good picture are wonderfully solid."

Lionardo is treated above. Franciscus Junius scarcely falls within the scope of the present inquiry; for his book *De pictura veterum* (1637), though it was known to du Fresnoy, and was the source of most of the classical examples adduced by de Piles, is hardly more than an encyclopedia of examples, and does not give evidence that the immensely erudite compiler had a single idea of his own on the theory of the arts. Vitry affirms¹ that du Fresnoy derived from Junius the three sub-divisions of the art of painting (*inventio, graphis, chromatice*—adopted by Molière under the names of *l'invention, le dessin, le coloris*) upon which he constructed his system. This does not seem very probable. Junius's classification² makes five heads, as follows: (1) *inventio sive historia*, (2) *proportio sive symmetria*, (3) *color, et in eo lux et umbra, candor et tenebrae*, (4) *motus, et in eo actio et passio*, (5) *collocatio denique sive oeconomica totius operis dispositio*. Dolce, on the contrary, divides,³ as

¹ P. 35.² *Argumentum libri tertii*.³ P. 150.

was said above,¹ into the three parts that reappear in du Fresnoy. Quoting Plutarch, Junius says in the fourth chapter² of his first book, *Quamobrem etiam non ineleganter Simonides dixit picturam esse poesin tacentem: poesin vero picturam loquentem*. This chapter consists of a six-headed phalanx of Greek and Latin witnesses to the alleged identity of painting and poetry. As Blümner remarks,³ "was sie belegen wollen, ist ganz äusserlich."

Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scultura, ed architettura* (Milan, 1585) is well characterized by de Piles. Its seven books fill nearly fifteen hundred octavo pages in a modern reprint.⁴ The work is technical to the last detail, and traditional with indefatigable amplitude.⁵ A single sentence from the first volume⁶ may illustrate Lomazzo's position with reference to the fundamental problem of painting and sculpture. Both arts, he says, tend to the same end, which is *di rappresentare agli occhi nostri le sostanze individue; e tutte due parimenti lo fanno, seguitando la quantità geometrica d'essi individui; e così l'una come l'altra egualmente s'affatica di rappresentare la bellezza, il decoro, il moto, ed i contorni delle cose; e finalmente tutte due non sono intente ad altro, che ritrarre le cose al naturale più simili che possono*. In the second volume, chapter LII of the sixth book has ten pages of "hieroglyphs," i. e.,

¹ P. 58.² § 2.³ P. 35.⁴ Rome, 1844.

⁵ Another of Lomazzo's books, entitled *Idea del tempio della pittura*, Milan, 1590, mentions (p. 18) among other authorities on drawing and painting, Varchi's and Dolce's treatises considered above. The first chapter in de Piles's *Cours de peinture par principes* (Paris, 1708), to be discussed later, expounds *l'idée de la peinture*, and has (pp. 21-24) a description of a *palais de la peinture* which was perhaps suggested by Lomazzo's "temple."

⁶ P. 11.

ancient and authentic figures, attitudes, and attributes for the expression of more or less abstract qualities and the personification thereof. Thus, *un uomo con la falce nella destra, e l'arco nella sinistra, significa che alcuna volta si affatica, ed alcun' altra con travaglio si esercita nelle cose della guerra*; ¹ *uno coll' elmo in testa con dentro una penna di struzzo a cavallo d'un toro, e che conduce con la sinistra un cavallo, è simbolo di malizia*; ² *una donna bella assisa sopra uno sgabello, significa allegrezza*; ³ *un uomo assiso in terra è rustico*.⁴ With an abundance of such symbols as these at hand, there would seem to be nothing that the painter cannot express; and though the present age is degenerate, the ancients and the artists of the time of Michelangelo gave expression to ideas which they formed in their minds;⁵ and their inventions were like those of the poets. Chapter LXVI (*Di varj affetti umani*) elaborates the likeness between poet and painter even to the extent of quoting fifty pages of "poetic pictures" found in poets from Homer to Ariosto. This chapter begins,⁶ *Considerando la cagione onde sia nato quel detto antico, tanta esser la conformità della poesia con la pittura, che quasi nate ad un parto, l'una pittura loquace, e l'altra poesia mutola si appellarono; e perciò che di rado è che ingegno atto ed inclinato a qual si è l'una di esse, non si stenda e non si compiaccia in gran maniera dell' altra parimenti*. The citations are intended to prove that *la poesia è come ombra della pittura, e l'ombra non può stare senza il suo corpo*.⁷

¹ P. 384.² P. 385.³ P. 391.⁴ P. 392.⁵ P. 460. Lomazzo's "idea" is hardly more than a well considered plan.⁶ P. 468.⁷ P. 469; cf. Lionardo, *supra*, p. 50. Du Fresnoy does not seem to have made much use of Lomazzo. De Piles, however, added as a note to

Giovanni Battista Armenini's treatise *De' veri precetti della pittura* (Ravenna, 1587) is of small account. Like Lomazzo, Armenini owes much to Lionardo, manuscripts of whose works were widely circulated in Italy. In a brief "parallel" ¹ we read, after having been told that both poetry and painting are arts of imitation, *Conciosia cosa che pure per essi famosi ci sia dimostrato con molte belle et viue ragioni, il proprio ufficio di un pittore douer esser quello, che etiamdio d'un poeta esser si vede; si che per ciò a chi dubitar di ciò volesse, non li rimarrebbe luoco. Et per certo che se si riguarda in queste due arti bene, et con sano giudicio, vi si vede così smisurata unione et congiuntione insieme d'affinità, che per ciò si chiama la pittura, poetica che tace, et la poetica, pittura che parla, et questa l'anima* ² *douer essere, et quella il corpo; dissimile però in questo si tengono, perchè l'una imita con i colori, l'altra con le parole. Ma certamente che in quanto all' inuentione predetta, et in quanto alla verità, sono d'una stessa proprietà, et d'uno effetto medesimo: conciosia cosa che elle parimente si mirano insieme, et sono intente al pascere gli animi de' mortali, et con sommo piacere et diletto consolarli, et incitar i loro spiriti, et i loro nobili animi alle cose dignissime, et virtuose, spesso ancora egli si cambia da gli huomini similmente le proprietà delle voci, che sono*

Du Fresnoy's line 114 "the measures of a human body" given in Lomazzo's first book, *Della proporzione naturale ed artificiale delle cose*. This first book was translated into French and printed (Toulouse, 1649) under the title *Traité de la proportion naturelle et artificielle des choses* by Hilaire Pader, the author of two poems, *La peinture parlante* (1653), and *Le songe énigmatique de la peinture universelle* (1658), neither of which is accessible to me. Cf. Vitry, p. 33. The Harvard University Library has a copy of Pader's *Traité*, and also a copy of Richard Haydocke's translation of Lomazzo's first five books under the title *A Tracte containing the Artes of curious Paintinge, Caruinge and Buildinge*, Oxford, 1598.

¹ P. 25.

² Cf. Varchi, *supra*, p. 55.

fra il pittore et il poeta, perciocchè l'uno usa quello ch' è dell' altro, conciosia cosa che si dica il pittor descriuere, et il poeta dipingere. Et i Grechi etiamdio per dimostrar più chiaro così fatta unione, usarono un cotal verbo, grapho, comune a questi et a quelli.

Before we proceed to Chambray and Félibien, a word about Giovanni Pietro Bellori's *Idea del pittore*,¹ which was first expounded in a lecture delivered before the Roman Academy di San Luca in 1664. Dryden,² though he cannot much commend the style, must needs say there is somewhat in the matter. There is indeed. Bellori is no more original than any of these writers; but he is a little clearer and fuller in treating the nature and function of the artistic imagination; and his "idea" quite rationally develops from a Neoplatonic mysticism to the matter-of-factness of that confession³ of Raphael's which has been so often alluded to, and in which Wackenroder⁴ saw evidence of divine inspiration. There are difficulties in the way of a theorist who wishes to reconcile imitation of nature with expression of an ideal; or who prescribes that the forms of art shall be forms of nature, but that the imperfections of natural creatures shall nevertheless be corrected in art. For what shall be the norm to which the products of art must conform? And whence shall the artist derive the guiding principles by which to make his corrections? Practically, the statues of the ancients

¹ Preface to *Le Vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti moderni*, Rome, 1672.

² Ker, II, p. 123.

³ *Per dipingere una bella mi bisognerebbe vedere più belle, ma per essere carissima di belle donne, io mi seruo di una certa idea, che mi viene in mente.* Letter to Castiglione. Quoted, e. g., by Winckelmann, *Gedanken*, DLD 20, p. 14.

⁴ *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*, ed. K. D. Jessen, Leipzig, 1904, pp. 7, 10 f.

may be set up as models; but the question still remains, what are the qualities that give them the right to be thus exalted? This question was more or less prominent in the minds of the Renaissance writers on painting and poetry according as they were primarily philosophers or primarily artists; but the more the poetic character of the painter is emphasized, the more he must become a maker and creator even of those quasi-natural forms by means of which he tells his story. As we have seen, Dolce is the first of the writers here considered who recommends the ancient marbles and bronzes as models to be followed by the painter that undertakes the delicate task of correcting and improving upon nature. But for Dolce, as for Alberti, a beautiful form is practically a composite made by collecting the scattered beauties of nature in a single new creation. Trissino's notion of beauty is a combination of symmetry with extrinsic ornaments. Varchi commends the discreet avoidance of naturalism. Lionardo subscribes to the Neoplatonic doctrine that the things of nature are veritable images of the ideas of God;¹ but his practical precept for the production of beautiful forms is selection and combination of beautiful details.² The first systematic presentation of the sanction of artistic ideals—like Raphael's—seems to be that given by Giorgio Vasari in the *Introduzione* to his *Vite* (1550, 1568). Describing architecture, sculpture, and painting as daughters of design,³ Vasari sets forth that design⁴ is *una appa-*

¹ P. 20.

² P. 182. Bellori attributes this precept to both Alberti and Lionardo; cf. p. 6; Dryden, p. 120.

³ *Vite*, Florence, 1846, vol. I, p. 149. Painting and sculpture are said (p. 91) to be twin sisters. It remained for Lomazzo to make poetry and painting *quasi nate ad un parto* (vol. II, p. 468), *supra*, p. 62.

⁴ P. 149.

rente espressione e dichiarazione del concetto che si ha nell'animo, and that this *concetto* is something that somebody has *nella mente immaginato e fabbricato nell' idea*. Design, then, emanates from the intellect; and the intellect, on the basis of knowledge, constructs for itself the notion of an archetype from which all existent objects are variations, with individual proportions and peculiarities. Vasari calls this notion *giudizio universale*. The *concetto* is such a generalized judgment; and since design expresses thus the universal in the particular, the intelligent observer—*ex ungue leonem*—recognizes in the fiction of the mind a true representation of the facts of nature.

Armenini, who believes, with Alberti, that history is the supreme subject for a painter, must needs define what the painter shall represent. And so he says,¹ *Deue prima il pittore hauer nella mente una bellissima idea, per le cose, ch' egli oprar vuole, accioch' egli non faccia cosa, che sia senza consideratione et pensamento; ma che cosa sia idea, diremo breuemente fra i pittori non deuer esser altro, che la forma apparente delle cose create, concette nell' animo del pittore, onde l'idea dell' huomo è esso huomo uniuersale, al cui sembiente sono fatti poi gli huomini. Altri dissero poi l'idea essere le similitudini delle cose fatte da Dio, perciochè prima ch' egli creasse, scolpì nella mente le cose, ch' egli crear voleua, et le dipinse. Così l'idea del pittore si può dire esser quella imagine, che prima egli si forma, et scolpisce nella mente di quella cosa, che o dissegnare, o dipigner voglia, la qual subito dato il soggetto, li vien nascendo.*

Bellori, having defined the ideas of the great Artificer, and shown how the "inequality of material" prevents

¹P. 137.

nature from realizing her intentions —though these are always good—proceeds with a passage¹ which Dryden² has blunted by too much condensation: *Questa idea, ouero dea della pittura e della scoltura, aperte le sacre cortine de gl' alti ingegni de i Dedali, e de gli Apelli, si suela a noi, e discende sopra i marmi, e sopra le tele; originata dalla natura supera l'origine, e fassi originale dell' arte, misurata dal compasso dell' intelletto, diuiene misura della mano, et animata dall' immaginatiua dà vita all' immagine.* The "idea" of the artist is an intuition, or an inspiration; it guides him in his selection of natural beauties;³ it enables him to paint angels, which he cannot have seen;⁴ it enables him to represent actions and passions which are transitory and cannot be found for long, if at all, in his model.⁵ The ancients were inspired⁶ by this idea, and their statues are to be imitated because these statues represent it: *Ci resterebbe il dire che gli antichi scultori hauendo vsato l'idea merauigliosa, come habbiamo accennato, sia però neccessario lo studio dell' antiche sculture le più perfette, perchè ci guidino alle bellezze emendate della natura.*⁷

Roland Fréart de Chambray published in 1662 a little book with a long title: *Idée de la perfection de la peinture démontrée par les principes de l'art et par les exemples conformes aux observations que Pline et Quintilien ont faites sur les célèbres tableaux des anciens peintres mis en parallèle à quelques ouvrages de nos meilleurs peintres modernes, Léonard da Vinci, Raphael, Jules Romain et le*

¹ P. 4.² P. 118.³ *Ma Zeusi . . . insegna . . . a contemplare l'idea delle migliori forme naturali, con farne scelta da vari corpi, eleggendo le più eleganti* (p. 4).⁴ As Guido Reni said; cf. Dryden, p. 120, and Lionardo on the painting of gods, *supra*, p. 49.⁵ P. 9.⁶ Cf. Dryden, p. 122.⁷ P. 11.

Poussin.¹ Chambray develops his "idea" as a supplement to the treatise of Lionardo, which the great painter left rather as a bundle of rough drafts than as a well composed whole,² and which, as we have observed,³ was published in Paris without the first part containing Lionardo's "idea" expressed in a "parallel." For the sake of system, Chambray follows the lead of Franciscus Junius, and speaks⁴ of the five parts which Junius declared the ancients to have observed in all their works. After deploring the degeneration of artists in his own time and extolling the genius and achievements of the Greeks,⁵ he undertakes to lead such of his contemporaries as are by nature endowed with a talent for painting in the right direction for the cultivation of it; that is, into the ways of the Greek genius. He is unequivocal in presupposing the possession of talent on the part of the painter who seeks to become excellent. "Seeing now it is not enough that to the forming of an able painter he be learned in these two points alone⁶ (which study will soon accomplish) without three or four more curious qualities, which he ought to be master of, but which are not usually attained to without a singular favor of nature, it happens that there appear so very few good workmen amongst the multitude of the profession, that it may well be verified of them which was said of the poets: that a painter is so born, not made; and really their genius is

¹This work was translated into English by J. Evelyn and published under the title *An Idea of the perfection of painting*, etc., London, 1668. My references are to this translation.

²P. 8.

³*Supra*, p. 47, note 6. Besides the Italian text there was a translation into French by Chambray himself.

⁴P. 10.

⁵P. 4.

⁶Viz., perspective and geometry.

so conform as it became proverbial that picture was mute poesie and poesie vocal painting.”¹ Genius is said to consist “in a certain vivacity and flowing of invention and grace (which all the study in the world will never attain).”² Similarly, “invention, or the genius of historizing and framing a noble idea upon the subject one would paint, is a particular talent, not to be acquired by study or labor; but is properly a certain ardor exciting the imagination, prompting and enabling it to act.”³ Invention and expression are the two great elements in painting. We hear nothing from Chambray specifically about the imitation of nature. Invention, the *what* in painting, naturally has preëminence;⁴ proportion and coloring are mechanical and are matters of technique; but the fourth part, “expression and motion of the spirit excels them all, and is indeed admirable; for it gives not only life to figures, by representing their gestures and passions; but seems likewise to make them vocal and to reason with you. It is from hence a man is enabled to judge of the worth and abilities of a painter; for such an artist expresses *himself* in his tables, and represents, as in so many mirrors and glasses, the temper of his own humor and genius.”⁵ Indeed, Chambray, from beginning to end treats painting as an art of expression, and the painter as a creator of significant symbols. Therefore there is nothing to surprise us in his reference to Horace’s “Art of Poetry (which is properly but the twin-brother of painting),”⁶ except the not very graceful application of Lomazzo’s definition.⁷

¹ P. 9.² P. 8.³ P. 11.⁴ P. 11.⁵ P. 14.⁶ P. 66.

⁷ *Supra*, p. 62. Chambray allows himself a very graceless diatribe on Vasari on pp. 97 ff. We may note that in objecting to some of the nudities in Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment* (pp. 15, 72) he echoes sentiments of Dolce, *Aretino*, p. 244.

André Félibien, the right-hand man of Colbert, "historiographe des bâtimens du roi," secretary of the Académie des Sciences, and official reporter of the Académie de Peinture, published in his capacity as reporter seven *Conférences de l'Académie de Peinture* (1669); as an original investigator, a treatise *Des Principes de l'architecture, de la sculpture, de la peinture, et des autres arts qui en dépendent; avec un dictionnaire des termes propres à chacun de ces arts* (1676); and as an amateur of painting and a friend of painters, *Entretiens sur la vie et sur les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes* (1666-88), and other works. Of these three books, only the second, *Des Principes*, is accessible to me.¹ This is rather technical than theoretical.² The high praise which de Piles gives to one of Félibien's books would make us regret the inaccessibility of all but one, if this very praise and the further facts of Félibien's early association with Poussin in Rome, and his later identification with the Académie de Peinture in Paris, did not make us certain that we should find in them all only an echo of the Academic doctrine; and this doctrine we can find still more conveniently in the *Conférences* of the Academicians

¹ In a copy of the second edition (1690) belonging to the Boston Athenæum.

² A few passages of more general purport may be quoted here. "En effet, si les paroles sont comme autant de coups de pinceau, qui forment dans l'esprit les images des choses" (preface, p. x). "Mais aussitôt il s'éleva [en Grèce] quantité d'excellents hommes qui mirent la sculpture au plus haut point, où elle ait été" (p. 305). "Les excellents hommes qui ont fait le Laocoön . . . [sont] dignes tous les trois d'une louange immortelle pour un si beau travail" (p. 305). "Le raisonnement est comme le père de la peinture et l'exécution comme la mère" (p. 399). "Dans la peinture, ce qu'on nomme ordinairement dessein est une expression apparente ou une image visible des pensées de l'esprit, et de ce qu'on s'est premièrement formé dans l'imagination" (p. 402).

themselves.¹ It is as well defined a body of precepts as those which constituted the rules of the French classical literature of the time; and, quite in the spirit of the age of Louis XIV, the Académie de Peinture, as Rocheblave says,² “vent *fixer* l’esthétique de l’artiste comme l’Académie française *fixe* la langue, et comme Boileau va *fixer* la poésie.” Under the influence of the Italian artists of the Renaissance, the French Academicians achieve their “fixation” on the basis of Greek sculpture (none too well represented) as the model for single figures, Poussin (none too well interpreted) as the model for composition of figures in groups, and Horace (*Ut pictura poesis*, misinterpreted) as the guide in a classical method of imitation of nature that shall conform to truth and reason, and shall satisfy a taste for those great things which comport with the *grand siècle*. Rocheblave has so well summarized this doctrine in its general aspects that I shall confine myself to the enumeration of some of its more significant details.

III.

But we must remember that it is de Piles’s and not du Fresnoy’s bibliography that we have been considering; and that, although du Fresnoy’s poem deserves to be ranked with Boileau’s as an expression of French classical esthetics, the poem was composed in Rome between the years 1633 and 1653—*i. e.*, a whole generation before Boileau’s (1674)—and finished a decade before the Académie de Peinture obtained a new lease of life. Due

¹ Cf. Henry Jouin, *Conférences de l’Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture recueillies, annotées et précédées d’une étude sur les artistes écrivains*, Paris, 1883.

² *L. c.*, p. 686.

regard for chronology compels us, therefore, to introduce at this point what we have to say about *De arte graphica*.

Du Fresnoy was a man of taste and culture; well read in the literature of the ancients, a painter himself, though more competent in the theory than in the practice of his art; in no sense original, but well informed through association with painters, through extensive observation of paintings, and through acquaintance with the treatises on painting that had been produced in Italy before his time. For the form and for some of the substance of his poem, du Fresnoy is indebted to Horace; most of the numerous rules which he somewhat dogmatically lays down for the painter can be traced back to Alberti, Lionardo, and their successors; in its general bearings, his doctrine is that of Nicolas Poussin.¹ It would be an unprofitable undertaking to seek the source or even the immediate provenience of du Fresnoy's "rules." Most of them are among the commonplaces of Renaissance esthetics. Since Vitry, however, has treated this subject of sources rather cavalierly, I present herewith the results of my own investigations for what they may be worth.

Vitry says ² that besides the oral instructions of Poussin and others, the example of Horace's *Ars poetica*, and some minor works, like Armenini's *Veri precetti*, du Fresnoy profited by two books: "Leonardi da Vinci de pictura liber et amplissima Francisci Junii excerptio." He does not believe ³ du Fresnoy made much use of Lomazzo; his opinion that du Fresnoy owed much to Franciscus Junius's compendium was evidently suggested by

¹ Cf. the admirable exposition of *la méthode classique de Nicolas Poussin* given by Paul Desjardins, *La Méthode des Classiques français*, Paris, 1904, pp. 165-211.

² P. 32.

³ P. 33.

the esteem in which Poussin held this "cumulus, ne dicam liber, densus et asper";¹ and he mentions no other ground of indebtedness than the idea of the divisions of painting. There are other grounds; but this one, as I have shown above,² does not exist; and Vitry ignores Alberti and Dolce, the latter of whom is represented in du Fresnoy's compilation by ideas not found in Lionardo, Lomazzo, Armenini, or Franciscus Junius; and he ignores the author of an art of poetry nearer to du Fresnoy's hand than Horace's and, I believe, quite as useful to him, namely, Vida. Rocheblave says³ that du Fresnoy's poem is derived "pour toute la pédagogie générale . . . presque textuellement de *l'Épître aux Pisons*." The composition of the poem as a whole, and sundry details of it, seem to me to bear a strong resemblance to composition and details in the works of Vida and Dolce.

The poem *De arte graphica* (five hundred and forty-nine lines) is too short to call for formal division into parts; but it is clearly divisible into three:

I. A prologue (ll. 1-68) giving a definition of painting as a mute sister to poetry (*pictura loquens*, ll. 1-4) who treats the same subjects as poetry (ll. 5-16) and, like poetry, selects that which is worthy to be glorified and perpetuated in art (ll. 17-24). There is no need of an invocation⁴ to the muses; for the author seeks not elegance but clearness (ll. 25-29) in this endeavor to reinforce talent and instinct by knowledge and by the rules of art (ll. 30-36). The *primum praeceptum de pulchro* is the general admonition to find out what is beautiful in nature, so that the painter may choose his subject

¹ P. 36.² P. 60.³ *L. c.*, p. 698.⁴ Saintsbury humorously remarks (vol. II, p. 31) that Vida's rule appears to be "When in doubt always invoke."

after the taste and manner of the ancients (ll. 37-44), and with the freedom of truth and sovereign reason (ll. 45-53). Theory and practice are to coöperate (ll. 54-59); ancient examples are to guide in the training of talent; science is to cultivate natural disposition, and set bounds to exuberant fancy: *Est modus in rebus* (ll. 60-68).

II. The "art of painting" proper (ll. 69-420) in a discussion of the details of the three elements, invention, design, and coloring (including chiaroscuro). Invention, which is a fruit of inspiration, has to do with the conception and effective expression of an idea (ll. 69-92). Before proceeding to the second element, the poet inserts a few lines (93-102) on the history of painting, saying that the art, which originated in Egypt, was perfected in Greece. Design (*graphis seu positura, secunda picturae pars*) includes (ll. 103-252) the representation and adjustment of the parts of single figures, composition of groups, adornment, expression, and style. Coloring (*chromatice, tertia pars picturae*, ll. 253-420), the distinctive element in painting, is treated in a series of technical precepts.

III. An epilogue (ll. 421-549) on the character, training, occupation, and virtues of a painter, culminating in brief encomiums upon Raphael (ll. 519 f.) for invention, Michelangelo (l. 521) for design, Giulio Romano (ll. 522-528) for the poetry of painting (*graphica poesis*), Correggio (ll. 529-532) for lights, shadows, and colors, Titian (ll. 533-535) for *amicitia, gradus, dolique colorum, compagesque*, and Annibale Caracci (ll. 535 f.) for sedulous and assimilative eclecticism. There is an *envoi* to Louis XIII of France.

Vida's plan is thus set forth by Batteux:¹ "Son *Art poétique*, que Jules Scaliger² préfère à celui d'Horace est écrit avec autant de méthode et de jugement que d'élégance et de goût. Il est divisé en trois chants. Dans le premier, il traite de l'éducation du poète, de la manière de lui former le goût et l'oreille: il indique les auteurs qu'il doit lire; après quoi il crayonne en peu de mots l'origine et l'histoire de la poésie. Dans le second, il parle de l'invention des choses et de leur disposition, surtout dans l'épopée, qu'il semble avoir eue seule en vue dans son ouvrage, qui n'est proprement que la pratique de Virgile réduite en art, ou en principes. Dans le troisième il traite de l'élocution poétique, sur laquelle il donne des détails très instructifs. Il y traite surtout de l'harmonie imitative des vers, avec une clarté et une précision qu'on ne trouve point même chez ceux qui en ont écrit en prose."

There is an obvious similarity between Vida's invention, disposition, and elocution,³ and du Fresnoy's invention, design and coloring, as well as between Vida's three cantos and the three parts into which du Fresnoy's poem naturally falls. But du Fresnoy is more systematic. He proceeds from the generalities of definition to particular rules touching the theory and practice of his art; and thence to the treatment of these matters in their personal aspect—that is, their application in the training of the novice, and their illustration in the careers of celebrated

¹ *L. c.*, II, 3. Vida's *Art of Poetry* with the translation of Pitt is conveniently accessible in *The Art of Poetry* edited by A. S. Cook, Boston, 1892, pp. 39 ff.

² *Poet.*, lib. VI, p. 740, ed. 1617.

³ "Expression, and all that belongs to words, is that in a poem which coloring is in a picture" (Dryden, *Parallel*, Ker, II, p. 147). "*Operum colores* is the very word which Horace uses to signify words and elegant expressions" (*ibid.*, p. 148).

artists. Du Fresnoy's third part corresponds to Vida's first. But if Vida had placed his first canto last, he would have made its admonitions more impressive, and he would not have been tempted to turn his tracks as he did when, at the end of his third canto, he resumed admonishing. It may be conceived that du Fresnoy, having written his prologue independently of Vida, as he must have done from the nature of its theme, paralleled in his second part Vida's second canto and the major portion of Vida's third; and in his epilogue covered the ground of Vida's first canto and the last part of Vida's third. I do not mean that du Fresnoy consciously performed any such operation, though this is not incredible. But I do think it probable that he knew and used Vida; and whether he knew him or not, there is some historical importance attaching to the resemblances between the two works; for agreement with Vida emphasizes the extent to which *De arte graphica* is an "art of the poetry of painting."

Vida writes (II, 455 ff.):

"Praeterea haud lateat te nil conarier artem
Naturam nisi ut assimulet, propiusque sequatur.
Hanc unam vates sibi proposuere magistram;
Quidquid agunt, hujus semper vestigia servant,
Hinc varios moresque hominum, moresque animantum,
Aut studia imparibus divisa aetatibus apta
Effingunt facie verborum; et imagine reddunt
Quae tardosque senes deceant, juvenesque virentes,
Foemineumque genus, quantum quoque rura colenti,
Aut famulo distet regum alto e sanguine cretus.
Nam mihi non placeat teneros si sit gravis annos
Telemachus supra, senior si Nestor inani
Gaudeat et ludo, et canibus, pictivæ pharetris."

The word *verborum* (l. 461) omitted, this passage might stand unchanged in *De arte graphica*: du Fresnoy's phraseology is different, but he gives to painters the same advice that Vida gives to poets. Du Fresnoy says:

- “Denique quaecumque in caelo, terraque, marique
Longius in tempus durare, ut pulchra, merentur,
Nobilitate sua, claroque insignia casu,
Dives et ampla manet pictores atque poetas
Materies” (ll. 17-21).
- “Praecipua imprimis artisque potissima pars est,
Nosse quid in rebus natura creavit ad artem
Pulchrius, idque modum juxta, mentemque vetustam” (ll. 37-39).
- “Nam quaecumque modo servili haud sufficit ipsam
Naturam exprimere ad vivum; sed ut arbiter artis,
Seliget ex illa tantum pulcherrima pictor.
Quodque minus pulchrum, aut mendosum corrigit ipse
Marte suo, formae Veneres captando fugaces” (ll. 49-53).
- “Non ita naturae astanti sis cuique revinctus,
Hanc praeter nihil ut genio studioque relinquas;
Nec sine teste rei natura, artisque magistra,
Quidlibet ingenio, memor ut tantummodo rerum,
Pingere posse putes” (ll. 177-181).
- “Sed juxta antiquos naturam, imitabere pulchram,
Qualem forma rei propria, objectumque requirit” (ll. 184 f.).
- “Naturae sit ubique tenor, ratioque sequenda” (l. 224).

It appears, then, that for du Fresnoy nature is the great mistress of art, and that the modern artist corrects the imperfections of nature and makes selection of natural beauties according to the bent of his genius and the fulness of his knowledge. Beautiful nature, the taste of the ancients, and the choice of reason are all one and the same thing. Invention is a kind of muse (l. 76), and her suggestions are the inscrutable gifts of Apollo (l. 77); but execution is an acquisition made through practice (l. 54) guided by science (l. 65). Hence it is of the utmost importance that a youth should have a competent instructor:

“Picturam ita nil sub limine primo
Ingrediens, puer, offendit damnosius arti,
Quam varia errorum genera, ignorante magistro,
Ex pravis libare typis, mentemque veneno
Inficere in toto quod non abstergitur aeo” (ll. 422-426).

Vida, who on his part is very solicitous that the young poet should have a competent instructor (I, 216 ff.), says, in the verses quoted above, that art follows nature as closely as possible, and imitates all natural peculiarities of time, place, and condition; and advises the poet—as du Fresnoy advises the painter (ll. 14, 37, 53, 470 ff.)—to observe rustic life (I, 341), to study geography and the customs of different nations (I, 391); but especially to consult ancient authors (I, 382), to let no day pass without a visit¹ to the founts of their inspired eloquence (I, 410), to take counsel of orators and teachers of eloquence (II, 496), but more especially of the Greeks (II, 547); for the ancients are the supreme authorities in elocution (III, 210), above all, Virgil (III, 554 ff.). Spingarn points out² that Vida took the authority of the ancients on trust, and that for him imitation of nature meant imitation of them; whereas, “for Boileau, the classics are to be followed on the authority of nature and reason . . . Boileau . . . showed that the ancients were simply imitating nature itself in the closest and keenest manner, and that by imitating the classics the poet was not imitating a second and different nature, but was being shown in the surest way how to imitate the real and only nature. This final reconciliation of the imitation of nature and the imitation of the classics was Boileau’s highest contribution to the literary criticism of the neo-classical period.” It must be added that this reconciliation, or synthesis, is distinctly foreshadowed in du Fresnoy. Nevertheless, although du Fresnoy is far in advance

¹ Du Fresnoy has the line (469): “Nulla dies abeat, quin linea ducta supersit.” Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, xxxv, § 84, records this precept as a rule of Apelles, and adds, *quod ab eo in proverbium venit*.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 131, 135.

of Vida in this matter, he follows Vida closely in the essential elements of his exposition. Both say essentially the same things on the relation of theory to practice, of talent to knowledge, of inspiration to judgment, and of impulse to choice.

Du Fresnoy insists with hardly less emphasis than Lionardo that painting is a science, and he concerns himself nearly as much with the question *what* the artist shall paint as with the question *how* he shall paint it. He repeatedly refers ¹ to the gap between the head that conceives and the hand that executes; and by anticipation he answers the question that Lessing ² puts into the mouth of Conti: "Oder meinen Sie, Prinz, dass Raphael nicht das grösste malerische Genie gewesen wäre, wenn er unglücklicherweise ohne Hände wäre geboren worden?" On the relation of theory and practice du Fresnoy writes (ll. 54-59):

"Utque manus grandi nil nomine practica dignum
Assequitur, purum arcanæ quam deficit artis
Lumen, et in praeceps abitura ut caeca vagatur;
Sic nihil ars opera manuum privata supremum
Exequitur, sed languet iners uti victa lacertos;
Dispositumque typum non lingua pinxit Apelles."

The latter part of Vida's first canto contains numerous passages describing the efforts of the young poet to master the practical elements of his art,

"Sermonum memor antiquis quos vatibus hausit" (I, 423),

such as this, for example (I, 430-433),

"Nec mora, nec requies, dubio sententia surgit
Multa animo, variatque, omnes convertitur anceps
In facies, nescitque etiam notissima, et haeret
Attonitus."

¹E. g., 11, 31, 464, 494.

²Emilia Galotti, I, 4.

For the author of a manual of rules, du Fresnoy takes a very conservative ground when he speaks of the relation of talent and knowledge. He protests (ll. 30-36),

“Nec mihi mens animusve fuit constringere nodos
Artificum manibus, quos tantum dirigit usus ;
Indolis ut vigor inde potens obstrictus hebescat,
Normarum numero immani, geniumque moretur ;
Sed rerum ut pollens ars cognitione, gradatim
Naturae sese insinuet, verique pacem
Transeat in genium, geniusque usu induat artem.”

And again (ll. 60-66),

“Ergo licet tota normam haud possimus in arte
Ponere (cum nequeant quae sunt pulcherrima dici)
Nitimur haec paucis, scrutati summa magistrae
Dogmata naturae, artisque exemplaria primae
Altius intuiti ; sic mens, habilisque facultas
Indolis excolitur, geniumque scientia complet ;
Luxuriansque in monstra furor compescitur arte.”

Vida is equally cautious (I, 362 f.),

“Saepe tamen cultusque frequens et cura docentum
Imperat ingeniis, naturaue flectitur arte.”

And he gives the same caution (II, 445 ff.),

“Ne tamen ah nimium puer, o ne fide calori,
Non te fortuna semper permittimus uti,
Praesentique aura, saevum dum pectore numen
Insidet ; at potius ratioque, et cura resistat.
Freno siste furem animum, et sub signa vocato,
Et premere, et laxas scito dare cautus habenas,
Atque ideo semper tunc expectare jubemus,
Dum fuerint placati animi, compressus et omnis
Impetus. Hic recolens sedato corde revise
Omnia, quae caecus menti subjecerit ardor.”

According to du Fresnoy, invention is the incommunicable benefit of divine inspiration (ll. 87 ff.):

"Ista labore gravi, studio monitisque magistri
 Ardua pars nequit addisci rarissima : namque,
 Ne prius aethereo rapuit quod ab axe Prometheus
 Sit jubar infusum menti cum flamine vitae,
 Mortali haud cuivis divina haec munera dantur;
 Non uti Daedaleam licet omnibus ire Corinthum."

Vida, though less outspoken, recognizes the same inspiration in the same function (II, 11 ff.):

"Nam mihi nunc reperire apta, atque reperta docendum
 Digerere, atque suo quaeque ordine rite locare.
 Durus uterque labor. Sed quos Deus aspicit aequus,
 Saepe suis subito invenient accommoda votis,
 Altera nempe arti tantum est obnoxia cura,
 Unde solent laudem in primis optare poetae."

In another passage (II, 395 ff.) Vida attributes productivity directly to inspired enthusiasm:

"Quid cum animis sacer est furor additus, atque potens vis?
 Dii potius! felixque ideo qui tempora quivit,
 Adventumque Dei, et sacrum expectare calorem,
 Paulisperque operi posito subducere mentem,
 Mutati donec redeat clementia coeli."

But both du Fresnoy and Vida claim for the judgment control even over inspiration. Each admonishes his disciple to be critical of himself before, during, and after executing his design; and to profit by the criticisms of others. Du Fresnoy (ll. 440 ff.):

"Nec prius inducas tabulae pigmenta colorum,
 Expensi quam signa typi stabilita nitescant,
 Et menti praesens operis sit pegma futuri.
 Utere doctorum monitis, nec sperne superbus
 Discere, quae de te fuerit sententia vulgi.
 Est caecus nam quisque suis in rebus, et expers
 Iudicii, prolemque suam miratur amatque.
 Ast ubi consilium deerit sapientis amici,
 Id tempus dabit, atque mora intermissa labori."

Vida, like Horace¹ before him, holds that "scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons." Vida says (I, 75 ff.),

"Quin etiam prius effigiem formare solutis
Totiusque operis simulacrum fingere verbis
Proderit, atque omnes ex ordine nectere partes.
Et seriem rerum, et certos tibi ponere fines,
Per quos tuta regens vestigia tendere pergas."

Vida believes in encouraging the young poet so far as possible, but also in criticizing him benevolently (I, 474); he cautions the mature poet to be in no haste to publish his verses, to seek rigorous judges, and after the lapse of time to return to his work and judge it severely himself (III, 455 ff.).

The delicate distinction between following one's native impulse and exercising a judicious choice, which is another aspect of the relations of talent and inspiration to knowledge and judgment, du Fresnoy and Vida draw alike. The artist in colors and the artist in words are both bidden to avoid subjects unsuited to their genius, to follow their genius in making choice of subjects or of details of treatment; but at the same time to choose in accordance with the canons of the ancients, and to select the beautiful from among the forms of nature. Du Fresnoy says² (II, 491-493),

"Et quamcumque voles occasio porrigat ansam,
Ni genius quidam adfuerit, sydusque benignum,
Dotibus his tantis, nec adhuc ars tanta paratur."

¹ In view of the general resemblance of *De arte graphica* to Vida's poem, and its difference from Horace's and from such other poetics as, e. g., Minuturno's (1559, 1563), and that of Vauquelin de la Fresnaye (1605), the fact that most of the points here enumerated were made by Horace, and might have been derived by du Fresnoy, as they were by Vida, from Horace, does not seem to make the enumeration and comparison otiose.

² Cf. II. 30 ff., *supra*, p. 80; I. 39, *supra*, p. 77; II. 50 ff., *supra*, p. 77.

Vida is of the same mind:

“Tu vero ipse humeros explorans consule primum,
Atque tuis prudens genus elige viribus aptum” (I, 39 f.).
“Quid deceat, quid non, tibi nostri ostendere possunt.
Inventa ex aliis disce, et te plurima Achivos
Consulere hortamur veteres, Argivaque regna
Explorare oculis, et opimam avertere gazam
In Latium, atque domum laetum spolia ampla referre.
Haud minor est adeo virtus, si te audit Apollo,
Inventa Argivum in patriam convertere vocem,
Quam si tute aliquid intactum inveneris ante” (II, 541 ff.).¹
“Atque ideo ex priscis semper quo more loquamur
Discendum, quorum depascimur aurea dicta,
Præcipuumque avidi rerum populamus honorem.
Aspice ut exuvias, veterumque insignis nobis
Aptemus. Rerum accipimus nunc clara reperta,
Nunc seriem, atque animum verborum, verba quoque ipsa.
Nec pudet interdum alterius nos ore locutos” (III, 210 ff.).

It is evident, however, that du Fresnoy does not tie the hands of his pupil as Vida ties the hands of his; and that du Fresnoy leads the way from ancient art to nature, neither ancient nor modern, as Vida does not—and this for other reasons than that Vida could hold up examples of ancient poetry to the eyes of his pupil; whereas ancient painting was known to du Fresnoy only in descriptions. Du Fresnoy followed the ancients as guides; Vida copied them as models, or plundered them.

Finally, on the necessary character and training of the novice, du Fresnoy and Vida are in substantial agreement. The qualities that du Fresnoy presupposes are:

“Judicium, docile ingenium, cor nobile, sensus
Sublimes, firmum corpus, florensque juvena,
Commoda res, labor, artis amor” (II. 488 ff.).

The days of ardent youth are the time to begin with the

¹Spingarn remarks (pp. 131 ff.), that Vida's “imitation” hardly looks beyond spoliation and translation of the ancients.

art (ll. 500 ff.) ; and this the mode of life for the painter to lead :

“ Non epulis nimis indulget pictura, meroque
 Parcit : amicorum nisi cum sermone benigno
 Exhaustum reparet mentem recreata ; sed inde
 Litibus, et curis, in caelibe libera vita,
 Secessus procul a turba, strepituque remotos,
 Villarum, rurisque beata silentia quaerit.
 Namque recollecto, tota incumbente Minerva,
 Ingenio, rerum species praesentior extat ;
 Commodiusque operis compagem amplectitur omnem ” (ll. 475-483).

Vida's whole poem is addressed to the young poet, as we are especially reminded throughout the first part ;

“ Nulli etenim insignem dabitur gestare coronam,
 Pieridum choreas teneris nisi norit ab annis ” (l. 84 f.) ;

his first book is a conspectus of good qualities ; he urges the poet to love his art, and despise riches (I, 507 ; cf. Du Fresnoy, l. 478) ; to beware of the distractions of love (I, 365) ; to go among men and roam the fields (I, 340 ff.). He points out that some are born to excel at the bar (I, 360), and others to be poets. But Vida is too much a man of the court and the society of the cultivated to recommend the life of rustic solitude which du Fresnoy extols probably because it was the mode of life of Poussin.

Enough has been quoted from Vida to show that he has nothing useful to say on the relations of poetry and painting. For him, poetry is first of all epic poetry ; and his poem ends with an apotheosis of Virgil. But when du Fresnoy says “ poetry ” he means dramatic poetry. The second line of *De arte graphica* calls painting and poetry sisters ; but in line eighty-five painting is bidden

“ Tragicae sed lege sorosis [ornamenta],
 Summa ubi res agitur, vis summa requiritur artis.”

This specialization of the meaning in which the word "poetry" is used is obviously of great importance; for the drama is in a real sense visible poetry; dramatic scenes lend themselves to fixation and perpetuation on canvas in a far higher degree than the less distinct moments of an epic action—to say nothing of the invisible substance of lyric poetry. A dumb show may be perfectly intelligible; and from the confessions of Otto Ludwig¹ we learn that a series of depictable scenes, with groups of persons standing in characteristic attitudes and making expressive gestures, but without causal connection, may be the skeleton of a drama. Conversely, the substance of a drama is easily reducible to a succession of depicted scenes; and painting is a sister art to *dramatic* poetry.

This point, among others, was made by Dolce. The *Aretino* is primarily a dialogue on the respective merits of Michelangelo and Raphael. But for the better establishment of his case, Aretino, speaking for Dolce, lays a firm foundation of general principles, defines, elaborates, and expounds the art of painting, and finally, preferring Raphael to Michelangelo, summarily indicates the claims to distinction of a number of other painters from Lionardo da Vinci on, and rises in a climax of ten pages² to a glorification of the merits of Titian. Dolce's plan is fundamentally similar to du Fresnoy's; he divides the art of painting into the same three parts as du Fresnoy;³ he associates painting with the drama in the same way that du Fresnoy does; and the opinions that du Fresnoy expresses about representative artists at the end of his poem are also, so far as they go, the opinions of Dolce.

¹ *Schriften*, ed. Stern, Leipzig, 1891, vol. vi, p. 215: *Mein Verfahren beim poetischen Schaffen*.

² Pp. 280 ff.

³ Cf. *supra*, p. 58.

In answer to an observation of Aretino's concerning suitable composition of scenes, the interlocutor, Fabrini, remarks,¹ *Questo istesso insegna Aristotele nella sua Poetica a gli scrittori di tragedie e di comedie*; and Aretino continues with an account of the way that Timanthes depicted the sacrifice of Iphigenia as it was lately seen on the stage in Venice in a translation of Euripides made by Dolce himself. Aretino warns² against exceeding the *numero convenevole di figure* in a picture, and Fabrini again refers to the drama: *Così vogliono i giudiciosi, che si dia al poema; e massimamente alle comedie et alle tragedie, una lunghezza mediocre; adducendo per ragione, che se una cosa animata è troppo grande, è abhorrita; se troppo picciola, vien dileggiata*.³ Of Raphael, Dolce wrote,⁴ *Perciochè oltre la inventione: oltre al disegno: oltre alla varietà: oltre che le sue cose tutte muovono sommamente: si trova in loro quella parte, che havevano, come scrive Plinio, le figure di Apelle: e questa è la venustà, che è quel non so che, che tanto suole aggradire, così ne' pittori, come ne' poeti, in guisa, che empie l'animo altrui d'infinito diletto, non sapendo da qual parte esca quello, che a noi tanto piace*. Dolce concedes⁵ to Michelangelo great excellence in design. Giulio, he says,⁶ was *bell' inventore, buon disegnatore e coloriva benissimo. Ma fu vinto di colorito, e di più gentil maniera da Antonio da Correggio*,

¹ P. 160.² P. 174.³ Du Fresnoy wrote (ll. 152 ff.):

"Pluribus implicitum personis drama supremo
In genere ut rarum est; multis ita densa figuris
Rarior est tabula excellens."

De Piles annotates (Dryden, p. 137): "Annibal Caracci did not believe that a picture could be good, in which there were above twelve figures. It was Albano who told our author this; and from his mouth I had it."

⁴ P. 262.⁵ P. 86.⁶ P. 274.

leggiadrissimo maestro. Of Titian, his friend and idol, Dolce cannot say enough: *Nè è maraviglia: perciocchè in costui solo veramente (e sia detto con pace de gli altri pittori) si veggono raccolte a perfettione tutte le parti eccellenti, che si sono trovate divise in molti.*¹

IV.

I shall treat the doctrine of the Académie de Peinture under the three heads enumerated above,² after Rocheblave: namely, in its relation to Greek sculpture, in its theory of composition, and in its theory of expression. In the details of this discussion we not only shall get corroborative testimony about the French "classical method," but also shall find more than one anticipation even of such a pioneer as Winckelmann.

It is no accident that one of the earliest of the *Conférences* had for its subject *la figure principale du groupe de Laocoön*. On the second of July, 1667, the sculptor Gérard van Opstal demonstrated³ to the satisfaction of the assembled Academicians that this figure, representing a man of high birth, a hero, a person of quality, of grand, noble, and beautiful form, was a perfect specimen of the artistic imitation of "la belle nature." This statue has no equal. It deserves to be studied, it has already been studied by the greatest sculptors and painters, as a model not only of expressions that cannot be found in a human model, but also of beauties that cannot be found in nature. "Il n'y eut personne qui ne convînt que c'est sur ce modèle qu'on peut apprendre à corriger même les défauts qui se

¹ P. 280.² P. 71.³ Jouin, pp. 19-26. Text as reported by Félibien.

trouvent d'ordinaire dans le naturel; car tout y paraît dans un état de perfection, et tel qu'il semble que la nature ferait tous ses ouvrages, s'il ne se rencontrait des obstacles qui l'empêchent de leur donner une forme parfaite."¹

Van Opstal's attitude towards Greek sculpture represented by Laocoön appears to be that of unquestioning submission. So was the attitude of the painter Sébastien Bourdon in a lecture entitled *l'étude de l'antique*,² and delivered July 5, 1670. Indeed, for Bourdon one ancient statue is as good as another, the "Hercule Commode, par exemple, ou bien . . . telle autre statue dont il [le jeune peintre] se sentirait plus particulièrement affecté et qui serait plus fraîchement imprimée dans sa mémoire." Bourdon holds that the pupil should acquaint himself with the proportions of ancient statues, should design after them, and, when he has designed from a living model, should subsequently correct his drawing according to the proportions of the marble one.

But such unreasoning subserviency was not the high-water mark of Academic attainment. In the discussion following Philippe de Champaigne's lecture³ on Poussin's *Eliézer et Rebecca*, January 7, 1668, Le Brun defended Poussin against the charge of having too closely imitated the ancients, and said that Poussin "ayant étudié et découvert les véritables effets de la nature, à l'envie des habiles gens de l'antiquité, il en avait fait comme eux un bon choix et un bon usage, et ne pouvait manquer de se rencontrer avec leurs idées; que si on ne fait ces distinctions, on aura l'injustice d'accuser tous les grands ouvriers de l'antiquité de s'être copiés l'un l'autre, puisqu'ayant pris la nature et la vrai pour modèles, il a fallu de nécessité qu'ils aient gardé dans leurs figures les mêmes

¹ P. 21.² Jouin, pp. 137-140.³ Jouin, pp. 87-98.

proportions et suivi les mêmes principes; qu'à la vérité les Grecs ont eu de grands avantages sur nous, parce que leur pays produisait ordinairement des personnes mieux faites que le nôtre, et leur fournissait de plus beaux modèles; qu'ils portaient des habits qui ne leur gênaient point le corps et ne gêtaient rien à la forme des parties apparentes; que même ces habits ne leur couvraient le corps qu'à demi, ce qui donnait la commodité à leurs peintres et à leurs sculpteurs d'en mieux observer les beautés; que, pour plus de facilité, ils avaient incessamment devant les yeux de jeunes esclaves presque tous nus, outre les athlètes robustes et bien faits dont les spectacles fréquents donnaient à ces excellents ouvriers une ample matière d'étude et de perfection."¹ M. de Champaigne having remarked with some surprise that Poussin omitted from his picture the camels that the Scripture narrative expressly mentions in connection with the story of Rebecca, Le Brun pointed out that this omission was not due to ignorance nor to indifference, but was made because the camel is not a comely creature. Le Brun continued: "M. Poussin, ayant considéré les espèces particulières des sujets qu'il traitait, y supprimait les objets qui à force d'être dissemblables, y auraient été difformes, et il les regardait comme de légères circonstances qui, étant retranchées, ne faisaient aucun préjudice à l'histoire. Il disait que la poésie en usait ainsi et ne permettait pas que dans un même sujet l'expression aisée et familière du poème comique se mêlât avec la pompe et la gravité de l'héroïque. M. Le Brun ajouta encore aux remarques de M. Poussin

¹Pp. 91 f. The agreement of these observations with the reasons given by Winckelmann (*Gedanken über die Nachahmung*, DLD 20, pp. 9-14) why the Greeks were a beautiful race, and why, therefore, beauty is more easily discoverable in their statues than in nature, is certainly striking. This text, however, was not published until 1854 (Jouin, p. 99).

que la poésie évitait même le récit des actions bizarres dans un ouvrage sérieux.”¹

These sentiments show Le Brun very near to Boileau, and to du Fresnoy—and correspondingly in advance of Vida—in his conception of the sanction of ancient examples, and quite at one with du Fresnoy in conceiving painting as an art of expression like poetry. The best expounder of painting as an art of expression is, however, the painter Henri Testelin in his lecture *l'expression générale et particulière*, delivered on June sixth, 1675.² Composition for the sake of expression is Testelin's watch-word; and in his view, the painter's procedure is identical with the poet's. “On dit que le peintre devait tellement assujettir toutes les parties qui entrent en la composition de son tableau qu'elles concourent ensemble à former une juste idée du sujet, en sorte qu'elles puissent inspirer dans l'esprit des regardants des émotions convenables à cette idée, et que s'il se rencontrait dans la narration de l'histoire même, quelque circonstance qui y fût contraire, on la devait supprimer ou si fort négliger qu'elle n'y pût faire aucune interruption; qu'on peut néanmoins prendre une discrète liberté de choisir des incidents favorables, ou quelque allégorie qui convienne au sujet pour la variété du contraste; mais que l'on doit éviter de faire paraître ensemble des choses incompatibles.”³ “Par l'écriture l'on peut bien faire une ample description de toutes les circonstances qui arrivent en une suite de temps, lesquelles on ne peut concevoir que successivement; mais qu'en la peinture l'on doit comprendre tout d'un coup

¹ P. 94.

² Jouin, pp. 153-167. Published in 1680 in the author's *Sentiments des plus habiles peintres sur la pratique de la peinture et sculpture*.

³ P. 153.

l'idée du sujet; qu'ainsi un peintre se doit restreindre à ces trois unités, a savoir: ce qui arrive en un seul temps; ce que la vue peut découvrir d'une seule œillade; et ce qui se peut représenter dans l'espace d'un tableau, où l'idée de l'expression se doit rassembler à l'endroit du héros du sujet, comme la perspective assujettit tout à un seul point." ¹ "L'Académie approuvant ces raisonnements détermina que le peintre se doit attacher aux caractères qui conviennent à l'idée du sujet et négliger les circonstances qui n'y sont pas absolument essentielles." ² The aim being always to bring out the full spiritual content of the subject, the painter will not hesitate to join angels or allegorical figures to groups of human beings. "Ce serait faire une injustice à un peintre doué d'un excellent génie de l'empêcher de joindre l'allégorie à l'histoire pour en exprimer les mystères, lorsqu'on le peut faire sans nuire à l'intelligence du sujet; qu'il serait à souhaiter, au contraire, que les peintres, en ne négligeant rien de ce qui est essentiel à leur profession, appliquassent leur esprit à bien connaître le sens mystique des histoires aussi bien que le littéral, leurs ouvrages en seraient beaucoup plus considérables et satisferaient davantage la curiosité des amateurs savants." ³ "Il y a des fictions et des allégories qui conviennent à des sujets saints et d'autres pour les sujets profanes; chacun sait que les corps qu'on attribue aux anges ne sont que des figures symboliques, et l'on ne voit personne trouver à redire qu'on en représente dans les histoires saintes, d'où l'on conclut qu'un peintre peut bien accompagner l'expression de son sujet de quelques figures allégoriques pour marquer et citer le lieu où il se rencontre, mais comme par des statues qui n'ont nulle part aux mouvements des figures

¹ P. 154.² P. 157.³ P. 158.

qui expriment le sujet; que, n'ayant que cette sorte de langage pour exprimer ses belles conceptions, il ne serait pas juste de lui en ôter la liberté; c'est ce qui a fait dire que la peinture est une poésie muette et la rhétorique des peintres." ¹

V.

Roger de Piles published his edition of *De arte graphica* seven years before Testelin delivered his lecture on expression. But Testelin's ideas were those of the Academy, and by no means date from the year of their formulation by him. In many respects de Piles departs from the Academic doctrine. For Poussin and ancient form he substitutes Rubens and modern color; next to Rubens he places van Dyck; and he subjects the Italian artists of the Renaissance to a new test of rank according to color and expression. His notes to du Fresnoy give evidence of considerable independence of judgment at the same time that they show a proper respect for the views and opinions of his friend and author. De Piles was himself a painter, engraver, and diplomat, as well as a writer on art. Among his paintings are said to have been portraits of Anne Dacier and Nicolas Boileau; and Vitry prefixes to his book an engraved portrait of du Fresnoy by him which gives evidence of no little talent. De Piles was an *artiste écrivain*. His most important works are, besides the annotated translation of du Fresnoy, a *Cours de peinture par principes* (1708) and an *Abrégé de la vie des peintres* (1715).

De Piles begins his notes to du Fresnoy with a "parallèle" between painting and poetry, explaining that both

¹ P. 158.

aim at imitation, aim to excite our passions, to produce illusion, to reproduce the heroic, and to eternize heroes.¹ In these aims painting has the advantage over poetry in 'speaking a universal language, and in appealing to the supreme sense of sight. The general rule of "imitation" by no means suffices for the painter. Apropos of du Fresnoy's precept of choice (l. 37) de Piles bids us "observe here the rock on which the greatest part of the Flemish painters have split. Most of that nation know how to imitate nature at least as well as the painters of other countries; but they make a bad choice in nature itself; whether it be that they have not seen the ancient pieces, to find those beauties; or that a happy genius and the beautiful nature is not the growth of their country. These ancient works from their beginning have been the rule of beauty."² Ancient statues are more perfect than nature because the sculptors selected beauties from many models "to compose from them a beautiful whole. . . . 'Tis also to be presumed that in the choice which they made of those parts they followed the opinion of physicians, who in that time were very capable of instructing them in the rules of beauty; since beauty and health ordinarily follow each other."³

The grounds upon which de Piles upholds the authority of the ancients thus appear to be rationalistic enough. He even goes a step farther, making, as Vitry observes,⁴ a point against Poussin,⁵ but also differentiating between

¹ Pp. 82 f. of Dryden's translation (edition of 1750) from which I quote in modernized orthography.

² P. 91.

³ P. 92. Winckelmann also emphasizes the health of the Greeks as a prime element in their beauty. *Gedanken*, DLD 20, p. 12.

⁴ P. 17.

⁵ "Dans la plupart de ses tableaux le nud de ses figures tient beaucoup de la pierre peinte, et porte avec lui plutôt la dureté des marbres que la

two arts that Lessing would have done well to avoid confusing under the common designation of *Malerei*. "We are here to observe that painters are not obliged to follow the antique as exactly as the sculptors; for then the picture would savor too strongly of the statue, and would seem to be without motion. . . . It therefore becomes the painters to make use of those ancient patterns with discretion, and to accommodate the nature¹ to them in such a manner that their figures, which must seem to live, may rather appear to be models for the antique than the antique a model for their figures."²

A long passage on drapery³ illustrates the difference between sculpture and painting. The ancient sculptors, perceiving the awkwardness of large folds and heavy materials, which would conceal the lines of the figure and necessitate large masses of stone, preferred clinging garments of light stuffs which, to be sure, made many wrinkles at the extremities and the joints, but allowed the warmth of the flesh to be felt through the garment, and made possible a number of delicate effects of carving besides. The painters, on the contrary, for whom heavy stuffs and large masses are only so many more opportunities for effective coloring, "are bound to imitate the different sorts of garments, such as they naturally seem"; whereas those "who have scrupulously tied themselves to the practice of the ancients in their draperies have made their works

délicatesse d'une chair pleine de sang et de vie" (*Vie des peintres*, p. 466). Referred to by Vitry, *l. c.*

¹ By "accommodating the nature" de Piles means expressing an ideal. On a later page (p. 98) he says we must learn "to understand what is perfect and beautiful in nature: to the end that, having found it, we may be able to imitate it, and by this instruction we may be capacitated to observe those errors which she herself has made and to avoid them."

² P. 96.

³ Pp. 142 ff.

crude and dry; and by this means have found out the lamentable secret how to make their figures harder than even the marble itself."

As to the demand for superior liveliness and mobility in painted figures, de Piles does not elsewhere attribute a greater repose to sculpture; but he does insist upon animation in painting. Commenting upon du Fresnoy's "*formae Veneres fugaces*" (l. 53), he says,¹ "Those fugitive or transient beauties are no other than such as we observe in nature with a short and transient view, and which remain not long in their subjects. Such are the passions of the soul. There are of this sort of beauties which last but for a moment; as the different airs of an assembly upon the sight of an unexpected and uncommon object; some particularity of a violent passion; some graceful action; a smile, a glance of an eye, a disdainful look, a look of gravity, and a thousand other such like things; we may also place in the catalogue of these flying beauties fine clouds, such as ordinarily follow thunder or a shower of rain." And again:² painting replaces "the history before our eyes as if the thing were at this very time effectively in action; even so far, that beholding the pictures wherein those noble deeds are represented, we find ourselves stung with the desire of endeavoring somewhat which is like that action there expressed, as if we were reading it in the history." The passions of the soul sensibly alter the appearance of the body, and it is the business of painters in their imitation of bodies to express all the degrees and species of passion; "for they will make, for example, six persons in the same degree of fear who shall express that passion all of them differently. And 'tis that diversity of species which distinguishes those

¹ P. 99 f.

² P. 106.

painters who are able artists from those whom we may call mannerists, and who repeat five or six times over in the same picture the same airs of a head.”¹ A picture, which is mute, imitates the gestures and actions by means of which mutes express their thoughts and passions.² Imitation, however, be it repeated, is no servile copying³ of real mutes or other natural creatures or objects; nor is it the method of “those who paint everything by practice, without being able to subject themselves to retouch anything, or to examine by the nature. These last, properly speaking, are the libertines of painting . . . [who] have no other model but a rhodomontado genius, and very irregular, which violently hurries them away.”⁴ The ultimate test of the validity of a picture is the degree of its approach to being a witness to the truth: “the nearer a picture approaches to the truth, the better it is.”⁵

The definition of pictorial truth is the first task to which de Piles addresses himself in the *Cours de peinture*. Having declared, “l’essence et la définition de la peinture est l’imitation des objets visibles par le moyen de la forme et des couleurs,”⁶ the painter’s purpose being “de séduire nos yeux”;⁷ de Piles concludes, “il faut que tous ses objets peints paraissent vrais . . . parce que le vrai dans la peinture est la base de toutes les autres parties qui relèvent l’excellence de cet art”;⁸ “car toutes les parties de la peinture ne valent qu’autant qu’elles portent le caractère de ce vrai”⁹—and is then face to face with Pilate’s

¹ P. 157.² P. 133; cf. du Fresnoy, l. 128.³ P. 139.⁴ P. 139 f.⁵ P. 140.⁶ P. 3.⁷ P. 4.⁸ P. 7 f.

⁹ P. 21. De Piles carries his requirement of verisimilitude so far as to narrate with evident relish how Rembrandt deceived the passers-by into imagining a picture of his servant displayed in a window was the maiden herself (p. 10), and to affirm (p. 17) that the essence of painting is “de surprendre les yeux et de les tromper, s’il est possible.”

question, what is truth? Though all men are liars, truth is the goal of all their endeavors. "Rien n'est bon, rien ne plaît sans le vrai; c'est la raison, c'est l'équité, c'est le bon sens et la base de toutes les perfections, c'est le but des sciences; et tous les arts qui ont pour objet l'imitation ne s'exercent que pour instruire et pour divertir les hommes par une fidèle représentation de la nature."¹ But "outre ce vrai général qui doit se trouver partout, il y a un vrai dans chacun des beaux arts et dans chaque science en particulier";² and "je trouve trois sortes de vrai dans la peinture: I. le vrai simple; II. le vrai idéal; III. le vrai composé, ou le vrai parfait."

I. "Le vrai simple . . . est une imitation simple et fidèle des mouvements expressifs de la nature, et des objets tels que le peintre les a choisis pour modèle . . . en sorte que les figures semblent, pour ainsi dire, pouvoir se détacher du tableau pour entrer en conversation avec ceux qui les regardent."

II. "Le vrai idéal est un choix de diverses perfections qui ne se trouvent jamais dans un seul modèle, mais qui se tirent de plusieurs et ordinairement de l'antique.³ Ce vrai idéal comprend l'abondance des pensées, la richesse des inventions, la convenance des attitudes, l'élégance des contours, le choix des belles expressions, le beau jet des draperies, enfin tout ce qui peut sans altérer le premier vrai le rendre plus piquant et plus convenable. Mais toutes ces perfections, ne pouvant subsister que dans l'idée par rapport à la peinture, ont besoin d'un sujet légitime qui les conserve et qui les fasse paraître avec avantage; et ce sujet légitime est le vrai simple."⁴ "Le vrai simple

¹ P. 29.

² P. 30.

³ "Ce second vrai, à parler dans la rigueur, est presque aussi réel que le premier; car il n'invente rien, mais il choisit partout" (p. 46).

⁴ P. 32.

subsiste par lui-meme, c'est l'assaisonnement des perfections qui l'accompagnent; c'est lui qui les fait goûter et qui les anime Il est constant que le vrai idéal tout seul mène par une voie très agréable; mais par laquelle le peintre ne pouvant arriver à la fin de son art, est contraint de demeurer en chemin, et l'unique secours qu'il doit attendre pour l'aider à remplir sa carrière doit venir du vrai simple. Il paraît donc que ces deux vrais, le vrai simple et le vrai idéal, font un composé parfait, dans lequel ils se prêtent un mutuel secours, avec cette particularité, que le premier vrai perce et se fait sentir au travers de toutes les perfections qui lui sont jointes.”¹

III. “ Le troisième vrai, qui est composé du vrai simple et du vrai idéal, fait par cette jonction le dernier achèvement de l'art, et la parfaite imitation de la belle nature. C'est ce beau vraisemblable qui paraît souvent plus vrai que la vérité même, parce que dans cette jonction le premier vrai saisit le spectateur, sauve plusieurs négligences, et se fait sentir le premier sans qu'on y pense. Ce troisième vrai est un but où personne n'a encore frappé; on peut dire seulement que ceux qui en ont le plus approché sont les plus habiles. Le vrai simple et le vrai idéal ont été partagés selon le génie et l'éducation des peintres qui les ont possédés. Géorgion, Titien, Pordenon, le vieux Palme, les Bassans, et toute l'école vénitienne n'ont point eu d'autre mérite que d'avoir possédé le premier vrai. Et Léonard de Vinci, Raphael, Jules Romain, Polidore de Caravage, le Poussin, et quelques autres de l'école romaine, ont établi leur plus grande réputation par le vrai idéal; mais surtout Raphael, qui outre les beautés du vrai idéal a possédé une partie considérable du vrai simple, et par

¹ Pp. 33 f.

ce moyen a plus approché du vrai parfait qu'aucun de sa nation." ¹

This exposition, though somewhat lacking in clearness, and not a little surprising in its classification of painters at the end, is sufficiently notable to have called for more attention than it seems to have received.² The single statement, "il y a un vrai dans chacun des beaux arts," running counter as it does to the whole trend of Batteux's book, *Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe*,³ contains in the germ the philosophy of Diderot's refutation of Batteux in the *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*;⁴ and de Piles's theory of the *vrai parfait* includes an important modification of Aristotle's definition, and Batteux's, according to which poet and painter are imitators of things as they ought to be. At the same time, it is a development of Boileau's all too rationalistic definition, "rien n'est beau que le vrai."⁵ De Piles reminds one of Daniello's mingling of fact and fiction;⁶ and he describes a kind of style that is rooted in actuality, however fantastically it may branch and blossom. For whether we regard de Piles's *vrai parfait* as the idealization of an individual model, or as the collocation and coalescence of ideal elements with the component elements of a model individual, the product is the same: the representation of the truth of nature, which to science is abstract, general, and ideal, and in art becomes concrete, particular, and real. Or, in de Piles's words, as he continues⁷ to speak of Raphael, "En effet il paraît que pour imiter la nature dans sa variété, il se servait pour

¹ Pp. 34 f.

² Blümner gives it none.

³ Paris, 1747.

⁴ 1751. Cf. these *Publications*, vol. XXII, p. 630.

⁵ *Épître IX, au marquis de Seignelay*, l. 43. Quoted as a motto by Batteux on the frontispiece of *Les quatre poétiques*, Paris, 1771.

⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 53.

⁷ Pp. 35 f.

l'ordinaire d'autant de naturels différents qu'il avait de différentes figures à représenter; et s'il ajoutait quelque chose du sien, c'était pour rendre les traits plus réguliers et plus expressifs, en conservant toujours le vrai et le caractère singulier de son modèle. Quoiqu'il n'ait pas entièrement connu le vrai simple dans les autres parties de la peinture, il avait cependant un tel goût pour le vrai en général que dans la plupart des parties du corps qu'il dessinait d'après nature il les exprimait sur son papier comme elles étaient effectivement, pour avoir des témoins de la vérité toute simple, et pour la joindre à l'idée qu'il s'était faite de la beauté de l'antique: conduite admirable qu'aucun autre peintre n'a tenue aussi heureusement que Raphael depuis le rétablissement de la peinture." For purposes of expression some painters have allowed themselves to exaggerate the forms of nature, and have developed a manner of treating details—called *charges*—which is not lacking in impressiveness. "Mais ceux qui ont une véritable idée de la correction de la simplicité régulière, et de l'élégance de la nature, traiteront de superflu ces charges qui altrèrent toujours la vérité";¹ and, finally, "les statues antiques, qui ont passé dans tous les temps pour la règle de la beauté, n'ont rien de chargé, ni rien d'affecté, non plus que les ouvrages de ceux qui les ont toujours suivis, comme Raphael, le Poussin, le Dominiquain, et quelques autres."² For de Piles, then, as for Winckelmann, Greek statues are models of beauty, and expressions of an ideal of nature in health; and the study of them is, if not the only, at least the shortest road to the perception of artistic truth. But for de Piles, as for du Fresnoy, Le Brun, and Boileau, it is reason that

¹P. 37.²P. 39 f.

declares these statues to be models; and the ideas of beauty abstracted from them are to be used as guides in the selection of beauties from nature, or as elements to be combined with the elements of actual persons and things within the ken of the painter.

VI.

The "man of fine feeling" whom Lessing introduces to us at the beginning of *Laokoon* says of painting and poetry "beyde täuschen, und beyder Täuschung gefällt." "Täuschung," as August Schmarsow remarks,¹ "klingt uns derber als Illusion, entspricht aber der rationalistischen Denkart des 18. Jahrhunderts ebenso wie der nüchternen Ausdrucksweise des Alltags, aus dessen Durchschnitt sich der Mann mit feinem Gefühle zunächst heraushebt." Lessing himself, however, in spite of the example of Mendelssohn, hardly attained to a clearer conception of artistic illusion than that of de Piles.² De Piles says,³ "Les autres arts ne font que réveiller l'idée des choses absentes, au lieu que la peinture les supplée entièrement, et les rend présentes par son essence qui ne consiste pas seulement à plaire aux yeux, mais à les tromper." Our modern feeling revolts at the idea of deception, whether practised by Rembrandt with his portrait⁴ or attained in the perfect illusion of Zeuxis's grapes,⁵ or Myron's cow. Transcending for us all the fidelity to nature, and even much of the sensuous charm of a picture, is the human appeal of the

¹ *Erläuterungen und Kommentar zu Lessings Laokoon*, Leipzig, 1907, p. 79.

² Cf. Karl Lange, *Die ästhetische Illusion im 18. Jahrhundert in der Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, I (1906), pp. 30-43.

³ P. 41.

⁴ *Supra*, p. 96, note 9.

⁵ P. 433.

artist expressing himself in his work. But this very expression is what de Piles, with Winckelmann, saw in works of art; and the capacity to make it is what de Piles sought to inculcate in artists; whereas Lessing, combating the "Wahrheit und Ausdruck" which modern painting seemed to have erected into its "erstes Gesetz,"¹ inevitably gave to that beauty which he declared to be the only thing represented by the ancient artist, and to be represented by the modern, a formalistic and unaffecting expressionlessness into which only a rationalistic theorist could be betrayed.² De Piles must answer for the "akademische Auffassung der Kunst bis zur schrecklichsten Trockenheit fortgetrieben" which Justi not improperly attributes³ to some of the things that he did; but in insisting upon the conception of pictorial symbols as the means of artistic expression de Piles was right, and less "academic" than Lessing. Expression⁴ was not only,

¹*Laokoon*, III, p. 164.

²*Ibid.*, II, p. 155; cf. *Nachlass A* (Blümner, p. 370): "Da Körper der eigentliche Vorwurf der Mahlerey sind, und der mahlerische Werth der Körper in ihrer Schönheit bestehet, so ist es offenbar, dass die Mahlerey ihre Körper nicht schön genug wählen kann." Mendelssohn protested in vain against this conclusion, saying (*ibid.*), "Dieser Schritt ist mir zu kühn. Die Schönheit der Formen macht vielleicht nicht den ganzen malerischen Werth der Körper aus, denn, wie es scheint, gehört die Rührung mit dazu." Chr. Schrempf has in his book *Lessing als Philosoph*, Stuttgart, 1906, some judicious pages (97-105) of the same tenor.

³*Winckelmann*, I, p. 298.

⁴"Le peintre qui a du génie trouve dans toutes les parties de son art une ample matière de le faire paraître; mais celle qui lui fournit plus d'occasions de faire voir ce qu'il a d'esprit, d'imagination, et de prudence, est sans doute l'invention. C'est par elle que la peinture marche à pas égal avec la poésie, et c'est elle principalement qui attire l'estime des personnes les plus estimables, je veux dire des gens d'esprit, qui non contents de la seule imitation des objets, veulent que le choix en soit juste pour l'expression du sujet" (p. 61). De Piles uses the word "expression" in its subjective and objective senses; i. e., (1) "ce que j'entends par le mot

along with composition, design, and coloring, one of de Piles's fixed standards for "academic" judgment, but also the source of a genuine enthusiasm, and the reason—or excuse—for an opinion, which Winckelmann also held, concerning a practice of painting that Lessing could not overthrow: the use of allegory.

One of the last chapters in the *Cours de peinture* is a *Dissertation, où l'on examine si la poésie est préférable à la peinture*.¹ Though given somewhat of an argumentative turn, this chapter is essentially a "parallel" between the arts, like Lionardo's, and Dryden's, and many others still to come; and, as might have been expected after the edition of du Fresnoy, de Piles, whenever he has in this treatise occasion to refer to poetry, does not fail to treat poetry as a sister art to painting. It is to be borne in mind, however, that de Piles, like du Fresnoy before him, nearly always means *dramatic* poetry when he says simply *poetry*. Thus, the sentence, "nos sens et la raison nous disent assez que la poésie ne fait entendre aucun événement que la peinture ne puisse faire voir"² would perhaps deserve Blümner's derision,³ if de Piles were not

d'expression n'est pas le caractère de chaque objet mais la pensée du cœur humain" (p. 491); and (2) "le mot d'expression se confond ordinairement en parlant de peinture avec celui de passion. Ils diffèrent néanmoins en ce que, expression est terme général qui signifie la représentation d'un objet selon le caractère de sa nature et selon le tour que le peintre a dessein de lui donner pour la convenance de son ouvrage. Et la passion en peinture est un mouvement du corps accompagné de certains traits sur le visage qui marquent une agitation de l'âme. Ainsi toute passion est une expression, mais toute expression n'est pas une passion. D'où l'on doit conclure qu'il n'y a point d'objet dans un tableau qui n'ait son expression" (p. 162).

¹ *Cours de peinture*, pp. 420–472.

² P. 18.

³ *Laokoon*, p. 36. As a matter of fact, Blümner ridicules a proposition that de Piles did not make at all; in referring to this passage, Blümner inverts it and translates: "Unsere Sinne und Vernunft sagen uns, heisst es, dass die Poesie jegliches Ereignis deutlich machen könnte, welches die Malerei ihrerseits sehen lassen könnte"—a very different story!

evidently thinking of the drama. The specification after the general statement in the following passage¹ is further evidence of this identification: "pour les effets que la poésie et la peinture font sur les esprits, il est certain que l'une et l'autre sont capables de remuer puissamment les passions; et si les bonnes pièces de théâtre ont tiré et tirent encore tous les jours des larmes de leurs spectateurs, la peinture peut faire la même chose quand le sujet le demande, et qu'il est, comme nous le supposons, bien exprimé." Hence the propriety of saying² concerning poetry and painting, "toutes deux conservent exactement l'unité de lieu, de temps, et de l'objet." De Piles demands poetic—let us say dramatic qualities in a picture; and if the means of pictorial art be the imitation or representation of bodies, its end is for him expression, even exposition and narration.

In the study referred to above,³ Fechner points out that however much authority Lessing's doctrine may have attained to in poetics, and however ready esthetic theorists may be to recognize its authority in the formative arts as well, painters and sculptors themselves have habitually disregarded it, and indeed have achieved some of their greatest successes in direct violation of Lessing's prohibitions. Examples of violent motion and emotion in sculpture, and of a naturalism which does not shun even the unclean and the ugly in painting are numerous and familiar. Strict logicians are not likely to abate one jot or tittle of Lessing's contention⁴ "dass nur das die Bestimmung einer Kunst seyn kann, wozu sie einzig und allein geschickt ist, und nicht das, was andere Künste ebenso gut, wo nicht besser können, als sie"; and it re-

¹ P. 442.² P. 429.³ P. 42.⁴ *Laokoon*, *Nachlass D*, p. 460.

mains incontestable that the art which Lessing calls "Malerei" is that which solely and alone is eminently qualified to represent bodies. But the moment that we ask, for what purpose?—the moment that we consider the characteristics of the various arts that Lessing jumbled together, it appears that there is almost, if not quite, as much difference between sculpture and landscape, as between sculpture and poetry; and that, although in a monumental statue the artist's endeavor is undoubtedly to represent a body complete and beautiful in itself, the significance of a painting may consist in the relation in which bodies stand to one another, or in the atmosphere that gives them their appealing tone without perhaps allowing them to be seen distinctly enough to make possible the perception whether they are in themselves beautiful or not.¹ The objects that the painter imitates are always bodies; but for the purposes of his imitation depicted bodies are, more frequently than not, merely the means to expression; and the effect for which he strives is the impression made by his work as a whole—a psychological phenomenon which finds no explanation in the qualities of "bodies."² Fechner demonstrates that the Aristotelian subjects of esthetic imitation in general, viz., character, emotion, and action,³ are subjects for the formative arts; but with different degrees of appropriateness for the different arts. Thus, statuary is the supreme art for the representation of self-sufficient character—whether in the form of typical beauty or of

¹ Cf. Schmarsow, *op. cit.*, pp. 60, 69.

² Cf. Fechner, *l. c.*, p. 255.

³ *I. e.*, ἥδῃ, πάθῃ καὶ πράξεις; *Poetics*, I, 5; cf. the commentary in S. H. Butcher's edition, London, 1895, p. 116. Cf. also Hermann Baumgart, *Handbuch der Poetik*, Stuttgart, 1887, and the review by R. M. Werner in the *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, xv, 3, (4. Jul., 1889).

individualized personality; reliefs are eminently able to represent action,¹ as the Pergamenian marbles testify; and painting, with its resources of light, shade, and color, is qualified, as only music and poetry are besides, to suggest and stimulate emotion.

It has long since been observed² that Lessing, constrained by the fetters of "imitation," "illusion," "bodies," and "beauty," could not get away from the objective, formalistic, materialistic notion of "painting," and, concentrating his attention upon the most perfect representation of the human body in sculpture, saw nothing of the artistic possibilities of landscape painting,³ implicitly condemned the whole Dutch school of *genre*, practically expelled the painters of historical subjects from the temple of the arts, and failed altogether to provide for any other sort of beauty than that of isolated and unrelated human forms.⁴ "Schöne Körper in schönen Stellungen!"⁵

¹The group of Laocoön and his sons is, in a sense, a specimen of high relief; it is designed to be viewed only from the front. Cf. Karl Sittl, *Empirische Studien über die Laokoongruppe*, Würzburg, 1895, p. 36.

²Cf. Schmarsow, *l. c.*, p. 48.

³"Von den Landschaftsmählern; ob es ein Ideal in der Schönheit der Landschaften gebe. Wird verneinet. Daher der geringere Werth der Landschaftsmahler" (*Laokoon, Nachlass A*, p. 394).

⁴Lessing inordinately restricts the painter's range of invention, saying (*Laokoon*, xi, p. 232), "Denn da er sahe, dass die Erfindung seine glänzende Seite nie werden könne, dass sein grösstes Lob von der Ausführung abhängt, so ward es ihm gleichviel, ob jene alt oder neu, einmal oder unzähligmal gebraucht sey, ob sie ihm oder einem anderen zugehöre. Er blieb in dem engen Bezirke weniger, ihm und dem Publico geläufig gewordener Vorwürfe, und liess seine ganze Erfindsamkeit auf die blosser Veränderung in dem Bekannten gehen, auf neue Zusammensetzungen alter Gegenstände. Das ist auch wirklich die Idee, welche die Lehrbücher der Mählerey mit dem Worte Erfindung verbinden." Lessing refers to Hagedorn's *Betrachtungen über die Mählerey* (1762); cf. Justi, *Winckelmann*, i, pp. 354 ff. It is manifest that Lessing was far from doing justice to the

⁵*Laokoon*, xvi, p. 252.

Fechner exclaims,¹ "das langweiligste allegorische Gemälde, wofern es nur schöne Körper in schönen Stellungen in schöner Landschaft zeigt, wäre, ganz im Widerspruch mit Lessings Verbot, das Ideal der Malerei; man brauchte sich ja gar nicht um die Allegorie zu kümmern, sondern könnte im ästhetischen Genuss schwelgen. Eine Ausstellung von weiblichen Modellen oder eine Anzahl Nymphen und Göttinnen, von denen sich keine um die andere kümmert, würden allen Anforderungen Lessings an malerische Schönheit entsprechen." But painting, which is a representation of a chosen, limited portion of the world in the totality of its appearance to the artist's eye at a given time—even a portrait must have a background and a frame—gets its beauty from the qualities of the depicted scene as a whole, and its significance not from the illusory imitation of bodies, but from the suggestiveness of the expression which the artist is able to make by means of this more or less illusory imitation of bodies as symbols, and a more or less taking reproduction of the tone of the atmosphere which gives these bodies their sensuous charm.²

' If Lessing's attempt to partition the field between the two sisters thus leads to a curtailment of the rights of one of them against which the artistic tradition from Lionardo

conception of invention in painting that prevailed among the French theorists. Whether he knew de Piles's *Cours de peinture* or not, I cannot say. A translation of this work under the title *Einleitung in die Malerey aus Grundsätzen* was printed at Leipzig in 1760; cf. *Antiquariats-Katalog* Nr. 86, *Die kleinen Klassiker*, Nr. 209, Friedrich Meyers Buchhandlung, Leipzig, 1908. Hagedorn had great respect for de Piles.

¹ *L. c.*, p. 255.

² In substantial agreement with Fechner, Schmarsow defines painting as "eigene, über die plastische Gestaltenbildung hinausgreifende Kunst, die eben nicht mehr die Einheit des organischen Körpers sondern die Einheit des Zusammenhangs zwischen den Körpern im Raum als ihre besondere Aufgabe erkennt" (p. 60).

to Winckelmann and the artistic practice from Polygnotus to Böcklin make eloquent protest, the question might well be asked whether it were not better to leave them as de Piles did in joint possession. De Piles gives to historical and landscape painting the first places among the varieties of pictorial art. He calls the former "le genre de peinture le plus considérable";¹ and though under the term "history" he includes a great variety of subjects, all belong to the realm of invention, and are expressions of that which the artist chooses to express. Fondness for historical subjects goes hand in hand with the dramatic character of painting; landscape² appeals to a more idyllic or epic mood. It too is a form of expression, and no copy of reality: "ainsi la peinture, qui est une espèce de création, l'est encore plus à l'égard du paysage."³ The very *imitation de la belle nature* which results in the *vrai parfait*,⁴ the emphasis upon subjective purpose implied in the consideration that the artist exercises choice, the constant admonition to the painter to correct the imperfections of nature, and the reiteration of the idea of the value of painting as a means of expression—all these things reveal to us in de Piles an enthusiast who looks upon the art from the opposite point of view to Lessing's, and enable us to understand how he could take the ground that Lessing spurned in respect to a means of expression that is not at all an imitation of nature, and that makes use of forms which, belonging originally to poetry, are nevertheless proper subjects for painting so soon as the imagination has bodied them forth. One may subscribe to everything that Lessing said about "Allegoristerei" and yet maintain that allegory has its place in paint-

¹ *Cours de peinture*, p. 53; cf. p. 389.

² P. 201.

³ P. 200.

⁴ P. 34; cf. *supra*, p. 98.

ing. One need not wince even at hearing that allegorical painting may easily degenerate into a system of incomprehensible hieroglyphics;¹ for as Diderot says,² every art has its hieroglyphs; and de Piles is nearer than Lessing to the truth that the "symbols" of painting are hardly more "natural" than the symbols of poetry.³ De Piles declares, to be sure, that words are but the names of things, whereas in painting, things themselves are presented to the eye;⁴ but on the other hand, he makes clearer than Lessing anywhere does that the figures of painting are something more than imitations of natural objects. The material colors used by the painter are the means of utterance for his thoughts: "ce qu'on veut appeler partie matérielle dans la peinture n'est autre chose que l'exécution de la partie spirituelle qu'on lui accorde, et qui est proprement l'effet de la pensée du peintre, comme la déclamation est l'effet de la pensée du poète."⁵ Provided, therefore, the purpose of expression is attained, allegorical figures are as legitimate as any that the brush can form.

De Piles defines allegory as follows: "l'invention allégorique est un choix d'objets qui servent à représenter dans un tableau, ou en tout, ou en partie, autre chose que ce qu'ils sont en effet";⁶ "l'allégorie est une espèce de langage qui doit être commun entre plusieurs personnes, et qui est fondé sur un usage reçu, et sur l'intelligence des livres de médailles";⁷ it is not the purpose of allegorical expression to convey its meaning with the unforced-

¹ Cf. du Bos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, 3d ed., Paris, 1775, I, p. 203; and Lomazzo, *supra*, pp. 61 f.

² *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*.

³ Cf. R. Haym, *Herder*, Berlin, 1877, I, p. 247.

⁴ P. 471; cf. Lionardo, *supra*, p. 49.

⁵ P. 495.

⁶ P. 55.

⁷ P. 58.

ful self-evidence of literalness: "la trop grande facilité que l'on trouve à découvrir les choses affaiblit ordinairement les désirs; et les premiers philosophes ont cru qu'ils devaient envelopper la vérité sous des fables et sous des allégories ingénieuses, afin que leur science fût recherchée avec plus de curiosité, ou qu'en tenant les esprits appliqués elle jetât des racines plus profondes: car les choses font d'autant plus d'impression dans notre esprit et dans notre mémoire qu'elles exercent plus agréablement notre attention. Jésus-Christ même s'est servi de cette façon d'instruire, afin que les comparaisons et les paraboles tinssent ses auditeurs plus attentifs aux vérités qu'elles signifiaient"; ¹ in painting there are allegories "dont nous nous faisons un plaisir de trouver le sens, ou d'en critiquer l'obscurité"; ² there are paintings that are entirely allegorical; but "les ouvrages dont les objets ne sont allégoriques qu'en partie attirent plus facilement et plus agréablement notre attention, parce que le spectateur qui est aidé par le mélange des figures purement historiques démêle avec plaisir les allégories qui les accompagnent." ³ The process called *démêler* must, however, not be one of insuperable difficulty, and all allegory must have three qualities: it must be intelligible; ⁴ it must be authorized; ⁵ and it must be necessary: "car tant que l'histoire se peut éclaircir par des objets simples qui lui appartiennent, il est inutile de chercher des secours étrangers qui l'ornent bien moins qu'ils ne l'embarrassent." ⁶

"Bezüglich der Allegorie," says Blümner, ⁷ "ist de

¹ P. 461; cf. Dolce, p. 242, *supra*, p. 58.

² P. 4.

³ P. 57.

⁴ P. 71.

⁵ "L'autorité la mieux reçue pour les allégories est celle de l'antiquité, parce qu'elle est incontestable" (p. 71).

⁶ P. 72.

⁷ *Laokoon*, p. 37.

Piles völlig blind." It might be nearer the truth to call him clairvoyant; for he proves himself able to pierce the shrouds of many a mystery that baffles ordinary eyes; or inconsistent; for, although he defines painting as an art "qui sur une superficie plate imite tous les objets visibles,"¹ "en sorte qu'il [le peintre] est obligé non seulement de plaire aux yeux, mais encore de les tromper en tout ce qu'il représente,"² he is willing in the interest of allegory to divest the visible symbol not only of its individual reality, but even of its visibility: "Et si le peintre, dans la vue de s'exprimer avec plus d'élégance, juge à propos de représenter les divinités de la fable parmi les figures historiques, il faut considérer ces symboles comme invisibles, et comme n'y étant que par leur signification allégorique."³ This is certainly not a happy expression. To speak ill of the bridge that has brought you safely over is bad enough; to deny its existence is madness. But de Piles's mind is so intent upon the *meaning* of allegorical figures that he can disregard their appearance. He is thinking of subjective expression and impression.

If poetry and painting are alike, the purposes of poet and painter cannot be radically different. In an interesting discussion of the function of poetry, Spingarn⁴ shows how successive writers manipulated the Horatian "prodesse" and "delectare," and remarks that "Minturno (1559) added a third element to that of instruction and delight. The function of poetry is not only to teach and delight but also to move, that is, beyond instruction and delight the poet must impel certain passions in the reader or hearer, and incite the mind to admiration of what is described." This third element was, from Alberti

¹ P. 313.³ *Vie des peintres*, p. 59.² P. 317.⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 47-59.

on, one of the most prominent in the esthetics of the painters, and is above all conspicuous in the *Aretino* of Dolce (1557). It is no less conspicuous in de Piles. De Piles holds that the function of both poetry and painting is to *instruire* and *plaire*; but "il est certain que l'une et l'autre sont capables de remuer puissamment les passions";¹ and "la véritable peinture est donc celle qui nous appelle (pour ainsi dire) en nous surprenant; et ce n'est que par la force de l'effet qu'elle produit que nous ne pouvons nous empêcher d'en approcher, comme si elle avait quelque chose à nous dire";² "je conclus que la véritable peinture doit appeler son spectateur par la force et par la grande vérité de son imitation; et que le spectateur surpris doit aller à elle comme pour entrer en conversation avec les figures qu'elle représente."³ Conversation, however, is an intellectual exercise; and, like the true friend of Boileau that he was, de Piles demands that painting shall be put upon a parity with poetry because it gives, equally with poetry, an opportunity to exercise the reason. Painting no less than poetry is an expression of thought; and its symbols, like those of poetry, call for intelligent interpretation, and give pleasure both through the perception of what they are and through the understanding of what they mean. "Si par le mot de raisonnement on entend l'action de l'entendement qui infère une chose par la connaissance d'une autre, il se trouve également dans la poésie et dans la peinture"⁴—a proposition which de Piles thereupon demonstrates by an interpretation of Rubens's picture of the birth of Louis XIII, then in the Luxembourg gallery, now in the Louvre.

Few painters have made bolder use of allegory than

¹ P. 442.

³ P. 6; cf. Chambray, *supra*, p. 69.

² P. 4.

⁴ Pp. 462 f.

Rubens, and the series of pictures in which he glorified the life of Marie de Médicis falls little short of audacity. In these, if anywhere, allegory has accepted its greatest hazard. Here, if anywhere, reason must come to the aid of the senses, or all esthetic pleasure may vanish in bewilderment, and the spectator will say with Blümner that allegorical and historical personages are mingled "in einer aller Vernunft hohnsprechenden Art."¹ The cool and clear-headed Abbé du Bos took this ground, perhaps in conscious opposition to de Piles. Du Bos was willing that old established allegories should be represented by conventional figures which have acquired, so to speak, the rights of citizenship among human beings. But "leurs cadets, qui depuis une centaine d'années sont sortis du cerveau des peintres, sont des inconnus et des gens sans aveu, qui ne méritent pas qu'on en fasse aucune mention. Ils sont des chiffres dont personne n'a la clef, et même peu de gens la cherchent."² Du Bos is especially impatient with the mingling of allegorical and natural personages in one and the same scene, since it destroys all illusion and takes away all verisimilitude; and he condemns these compositions as defeating the very end of painting. Of the picture on which de Piles employs his interpretative sagacity du Bos says,³ "Je suis encore persuadé que le magnifique tableau qui représente l'accouchement de Marie de Médicis, plairait davantage si Rubens, au lieu du génie et des autres figures allégoriques qui entrent dans l'action du tableau, y avait fait paraître celles des femmes de ce temps-là qui pouvaient assister aux couches de la reine. On le regarderait avec plus de satisfaction, si Rubens avait exercé sa poésie à représenter les unes contentes, les

¹ *Laokoon*, p. 18.² *Réflexions critiques*, I, p. 194.³ P. 197.

autres transportées de joie, quelques-unes sensibles aux douleurs de la reine, et d'autres un peu mortifiées de voir un dauphin en France. Les peintres sont poètes, mais leur poésie ne consiste pas tant à inventer des chimères ou des jeux d'esprit, qu'à bien imaginer quelles passions et quels sentiments l'on doit donner aux personnages, suivant leur caractère et la situation où l'on les suppose, comme à trouver les expressions propres à rendre ces passions sensibles, et à faire deviner ces sentiments." There is no denying the reasonableness of these propositions, which Blümner quotes with approval; and the conclusion that du Bos reaches after several pages of further argumentation is sound, if one accepts the premises. The conclusion is,¹ "les tableaux ne doivent pas être des énigmes, et le but de la peinture n'est pas d'exercer notre imagination, en lui donnant des sujets embrouillés à deviner. Son but est de nous émouvoir, et par conséquent les sujets de ses ouvrages ne sauraient être trop faciles à entendre." This is the very reverse of de Piles's doctrine. How is it with the premises from which du Bos deduced this conclusion, and what would be the effect of the conclusion as a precept? What did Rubens seek to express in this series of pictures? Clearly, it was not beyond his power to do with the literalness of history all that du Bos wished him to have done. But he tried to give an interpretation of the meaning of history in figurative form. Into bodies whose very unnaturalness connects them with the world of the spirit he breathed the animation of that poetry which Varchi and Armenini called the soul of things; "fleshiness" itself in these figures serves to spiritualize each picture taken as a whole; and the picture as a whole reveals, or is intended to reveal,

¹ P. 212.

the divinity that doth hedge a king. The most eloquent of Rubens's admirers in our own time thus elucidates the artist's motives:¹ "In den Geschichten der Maria von Medici führt er die Gottheiten und allegorischen Personen als die eigentlich treibenden Kräfte mitten unter den Menschenkindern seiner Tage vor, und erreicht so eine Historiographie nach den Anschauungen der Gesellschaft, für die er schafft, wie sie bei einer Trennung beider Klassen von Wesen gar nicht möglich gewesen wäre. Die ganze Erklärung bevorzugter Menschenschicksale, deren Bahnen in den Sternen geschrieben stehen und dort von der Hand der Vorsehung vorgezeichnet sind, findet in diesem Gemäldezyklus ihren Ausdruck, wie Schiller sie seinem Wallenstein in den Mund zu legen versucht." And the sensible Sir Joshua Reynolds reminds us of two other points of view from which to judge these and similar allegorical paintings. In his seventh *Discourse*² Reynolds says of Rubens, "if the artist considered himself as engaged to furnish this gallery with a rich, various, and splendid ornament, this could not be done, at least in an equal

¹ Schmarsow, *l. c.*, p. 73.

² Cf. E. G. Johnson, *Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses*, Chicago, 1891, p. 187. Reynolds's *Discourses*, which he delivered as President of the Royal Academy between the years 1769 and 1790 are among the best expositions in English of the art of painting in its more general bearings. Reynolds speaks, like Corneille, in his discourses on the drama, with the authority and modesty of knowledge and successful experience. Towards the literature of the subject that we have discussed his attitude is critical, especially towards that part of it which emphasizes genius, or any other irrational element. He does not belong, therefore, in the category of those whose theories are developments of a tradition based upon subserviency to authority; but is, like his friend Burke, whose treatise on the Sublime he esteemed so highly, an independent, empirical philosopher. He even denies that painting is an art of imitation. Although he did not begin his discourses until three years after the publication of *Laokoon* (1766), he seems to have had no knowledge of Lessing's work.

degree, without peopling the air and water with these allegorical figures; he therefore accomplished all that he purposed." And secondly, "what has been so often said to the disadvantage of allegorical poetry—that it is tedious and uninteresting—cannot with the same propriety be applied to painting, where the interest is of a different kind. If allegorical painting produces a greater variety of ideal beauty, a richer, a more various and delightful composition, and gives to the artist a greater opportunity of exhibiting his skill, all the interest he wishes for is accomplished; such a picture not only attracts but fixes the attention."

It is of less immediate moment for us to seek an agreement upon the sanctions of allegory ¹ than to understand the kind of painting that de Piles and his compeers equated with poetry. For de Piles, painting was so far from being an imitation of bodies that it tended to become even incorporeal; and when he said "*Ut pictura poesis*" he was as far as possible from advocating a frosty versified description of external nature. His "parallel" ² is indeed more traditional than original. He makes little attempt to distinguish between the arts: painting and poetry differ, he says, only in practice and execution; ³ but his idea that pictorial execution is more difficult than poetic execution ⁴ is also Lessing's in *Laokoon*; ⁵ he has the ideas of succession and coexistence as clearly in mind ⁶ as Lessing has; and, as it were in spite of himself, he admits a certain difference in

¹ Cf. H. Blümner, *Laokoon-Studien*, 1, Freiburg, 1881; reviewed by Veit Valentin in the *Beiblatt zur Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, Nr. 37, June 8, 1882; V. Valentin, *Kunst, Symbolik und Allegorie*, in the *Zeitschrift* aforesaid, XVIII (1883), pp. 120 ff., 145 ff.; Schmarsow's books referred to *l. c.*, p. 115; and Volkelt, *l. c.*, p. 405.

² *Cours de peinture*, pp. 420–472.

⁴ P. 422 f.

⁵ XI, p. 231.

³ P. 444.

⁶ P. 449.

the kind of subjects appropriate for poetry and painting: ¹ "la principale fin du poète est d'imiter les mœurs et les actions des hommes: la peinture a le même objet; mais elle y va d'une manière bien plus étendue; car on ne peut nier qu'elle n'imité Dieu dans sa toute-puissance: c'est à dire, dans la création des choses visibles." And on the other hand, ² "Je sais bien que l'on peut attribuer à la parole des expressions que la peinture ne peut suppléer qu'imparfaitement: mais je sais bien aussi que la poésie est fort éloignée d'exprimer avec autant de vérité et d'exactitude que la peinture tout ce qui tombe sous le sens de la vue. Quelque description que la poésie nous fasse d'un pays, quelque soin qu'elle prenne à nous représenter la physionomie, les traits, et la couleur d'un visage, ces portraits laisseront toujours de l'obscurité et de l'incertitude dans l'esprit et n'approcheront jamais de ceux que la peinture nous expose." This is an unmistakable warning against "die Schilderungssucht in der Poesie." ³

VII.

Dryden's *Parallel of Poetry and Painting* is described by Ker ⁴ as "in the main a statement of the case for idealism in art, with the implication that the true following of nature in art is to discover the ideal and to neglect the distractions of the manifold particulars of experience." After a few prefatory words concerning himself, Dryden begins with a fairly full summary of Bellori's "Idea of

¹ P. 452.

² Pp. 468 f.

³ Blümner can hardly have had these sentences in mind when he wrote of de Piles's "parallel" between the arts: "Hier ist freilich von Einsicht in ihr gegenseitiges Verhältnis keine Rede" (*Laokoon*, p. 36).

⁴ *L. c.*, I, p. lxviii.

a painter," and then proceeds with what is practically a running commentary upon du Fresnoy's poem, showing how the rules of one art find application in the practice of the other. The most significant of his remarks are particular applications of these rules—including confessions about his own works;—and on the general theory of either poetry or painting he has little to add to the traditional doctrine. It is noteworthy, however, that he departs from du Fresnoy's assimilation of painting to dramatic poetry, and finds room for other expressions in painting than those of nature idealized. Thus, the ideal of perfect humanity seems to him to belong only to the characters in epic poetry;¹ so that the painter's representations of the ideal stand closer to the epic than to the drama. For "the perfection of . . . stage-characters consists chiefly in their likeness to the deficient faulty nature, which is their original";² and "this idea of perfection is of little use in portraits."³ But like the writer of tragedies, comedies, and farces, the painter may represent persons and scenes that are more or less noble, or even grotesque and merely amusing.⁴ "The principal end of painting is to please, and the chief design of poetry is to instruct. In this the latter seems to have the advantage of the former; but if we consider the artists themselves on both sides, certainly their aims are the very same; they would both make sure of pleasing, and that in preference to instruction."⁵ As to ideal imitation, Dryden holds, with

¹ "There is scarce a frailty to be left in the best of them, any more than is to be found in the divine nature" (Ker, II, p. 271). Dryden was then working on his translation of Virgil.

² P. 125.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ P. 132.

⁵ P. 128.

Boileau and others, that the esthetic pleasure which it gives is due to its being a representation of the higher truth of nature.¹

VIII.

Among the many writers on painting and poetry in the eighteenth century, two, du Bos and Batteux, expressly committed themselves to faith in the nostrum *Ut pictura poesis*. But since I have elsewhere² briefly animadverted to them, and their importance has been adequately set forth by Blümner³ and others, I shall pass over them and not a few other theorists who might be examined in connection with this subject; and shall bring my study to a close with the consideration of a man who stands in particularly intimate relation to de Piles, the painter Antoine Coypel. His *Discours prononcés dans les conférences de l'Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture*,⁴ though known to Lessing,⁵ have been disregarded by Blümner.

Coypel was not only a devoted friend of Roger de Piles,⁶ but also an ardent admirer of Boileau. He relates⁷ how Boileau encouraged him to publish the poem *L'esthétique du peintre* which, long before, he had composed in the form of an epistle to his son,⁸ and to write the series of dissertations on various texts from it which he read before

¹ Cf. p. 137.

² Cf. these *Publications*, vol. xxii, pp. 621-630.

³ *Laokoon*, pp. 39-45.

⁴ Paris, 1721; cf. Jouin, pp. 215-368.

⁵ *Laokoon*, *Nachlass D*, p. 469.

⁶ Coypel designed the frontispiece to de Piles's *Abrégé de la vie des peintres*.

⁷ Jouin, p. 367.

⁸ Charles Antoine, known both as a painter and as a dramatist; cf. Lessing's *Theatralische Bibliothek*, 4. Stück, 1758.

the Académie de Peinture and subsequently, as we have said, published in 1721. The first discourse¹ in this volume was designed as a preface, and is a rhapsody on "l'excellence de la peinture." It contains little that is new or remarkable, but may fairly be taken as a corroboration of de Piles.² When, therefore, Coypel protests that by the word painter he means creative artist and not artisan in colors; that painting as well as eloquence is qualified to treat subjects from the realm of the mind or the heart; that "elle sait par les allégories donner à des choses invisibles des images corporelles qui les font voir au même temps aux yeux et à l'esprit";³ that "il est vrai que la peinture et la poésie sont deux sœurs, et que ce qui convient à l'une convient également à l'autre; même enthousiasme, même génie, mêmes principes";⁴ and that in both poetry and painting there is produced a "concert parfait qui enchanté les yeux, l'esprit, l'imagination et le cœur"⁵—we may rest assured that painting so understood was an art of expression and not one of mere representation; and that it was so understood by de Piles and by Boileau.

For if Coypel differs at all from de Piles, it is in the direction of greater likeness to Boileau. *L'esthétique du peintre* quotes from Boileau, just as *De arte graphica* quotes from Horace; it puts a little more stress than is put by either du Fresnoy or de Piles upon reason; it restates de Piles's idea of *le vrai parfait*:

"Le dessin élégant de l'antique sculpture,
Joint aux effets naïfs que fournit la nature"⁶—

¹ Read to the Academy Dec. 7, 1720; Jouin, pp. 215–229.

² "J'étais toujours le confident de ses ouvrages à mesure qu'il les produisait. Cette confiance, autant utile qu'agréable pour moi, m'engagea à quelque retour" (Jouin, p. 367).

³ P. 219.

⁵ P. 220.

⁴ P. 219.

⁶ Ll. 89, 90.

but its supreme commandment is (ll. 175 f.):

“Puissez dans le vrai seul le solide et le beau,
Que la raison partout guide votre pinceau.”

The comments which in the form of *discours* follow the *épître* confirm the impression given by the verses, that Coypel sought to be for the painter what Boileau had been for the poet, a rationalizing legislator. Boileau is “l’Horace de nos jours”;¹ “et c’est la raison même qui parle par sa bouche.”² “En effet, ne voyons-nous pas tous les jours que les mêmes traits qui ont le plus frappé les hommes dans les ouvrages des modernes sont ceux mêmes qui ont fait admirer les chefs-d’œuvres des grands maîtres de l’antiquité? Car le bon sens et la raison sont de tous les siècles et de tous les temps, et la vérité ne doit être qu’une.”³ Coypel, then, entered into full possession of Boileau’s “highest contribution to the literary criticism of the neo-classical period”;⁴ and when he says,⁵ “le grand peintre doit être poète,” and shows how in the six elements, “un événement convenable et important, . . . la fable, les mœurs, la direction, la décoration, et la musique,”⁶ a heroic picture is like a tragedy, we cannot suppose him carried away by any visionary enthusiasm, but must credit him with sober earnest in the identification that du Fresnoy and de Piles also made of painting and the drama.

IX.

The *Vorrede* to Lessing’s *Laokoon* contains in condensed form a number of ideas more fully elaborated in one of the preliminary sketches preserved as *Nachlass A*.⁷ Les-

¹ P. 305.

² P. 270.

³ P. 303.

⁴ Spingarn; cf. *supra*, p. 78.

⁵ P. 277.

⁶ P. 239.

⁷ Blümner, pp. 357 f.

sing speaks here of the tendency to *Schilderungssucht* and *Allegoristerei* which has resulted from imperfect demarcation of the fields of painting and poetry, and continues, "Ausser diesen Verleitungen der Dichter und Künstler selbst, haben die seichten Parallelen der Poesie und Malerey auch den Criticus öfters zu ungegründeten Urtheilen verführet, wenn er in den Werken des Dichters und Mahlers über einerley Vorwurf, die darinn bemerkten Abweichungen von einander zu Fehlern machen wollen, die er dem einen oder dem andern, nachdem er entweder mehr Geschmack an der Dichtkunst oder Malerey hat, zur Last geleeget. Und diesen ungegründeten Urtheilen wenigstens abzuhelpfen, dürfte es sich wohl der Mühe verlohnen, die Medaille auch einmal umzukehren, und die Verschiedenheit zu erwägen, die sich zwischen der Dichtkunst und Malerey findet, um zu sehen, ob aus dieser Verschiedenheit nicht Gesetze folgen, die der einen und der andern eigenthümlich sind, und die eine öfters nöthigen, einen ganz andern Weg zu betreten, als ihre Schwester betritt, wenn sie wirklich den Titel einer Schwester behaupten, und nicht in eine eyfersüchtige nachhaffende Nebenbuhlerin ausarten will." There can be no doubt that it was high time, in Germany at any rate, to distinguish, instead of comparing, or seeking reasons for preferring one art to the other. Nor can there be any question that many of the "parallels" were indeed shallow. But not every one, and not any in all respects. The very worst does not mean by its *Ut pictura poesis* to encourage the poet to a lifeless enumeration of the parts of bodies, or to any other inexpressive copying of reality. In saying *Ut pictura poesis* most of them mean *Ut poesis pictura*; and the kind of painting so likened to poetry is no inappropriate illustration of a poetic process. Among the artists and theo-

rists whose works we have examined there was hardly one who did not know more about poetry than Lessing knew about painting. We get from *Laokoon* and from Blümler's historical introduction an ex-parte presentation of their case by opponents of their doctrine. Letting the painters speak for themselves, we acquire increased respect for their intentions, and many times a new opinion of their insight, whatever we may think of the pictures that they produced or praised. We get, furthermore, a better conception of *Laokoon* as the descendant of a long and not ignoble ancestry; and our admiration for Lessing and his critical method ¹ rises to the pitch of our esteem for those whom he opposed, and who, without method, were often unable to formulate, as he formulated, practical rules of immediate applicability to practical problems. The poet and the painter alike could not but profit by the caution that Lessing gave them concerning the limits of their respective arts. If these limits were too narrow, the limits drawn by Lessing's predecessors were generally too wide. A reconsideration of the whole matter ought, finally, to induce in us a catholic spirit towards questions which are many-sided and difficult, and which the unaided reason is perhaps not competent to settle.

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¹ Cf. W. Wundt, *Lessing und die kritische Methode*, in *Essays*,² Leipzig, 1906, pp. 417-440; and W. Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, Leipzig, 1906, pp. 22-42.